

LIKE IT NEVER HAPPENED. The Peninsula, the "jewel" of Metro Manila's hotel circuit, reopens on Monday, after spending some P5 million replacing marble tiles at the lobby, plastering and repainting walls to obliterate bullet marks from the assault five days ago. (See story below.)

EDWIN BACASMAS

ABS-CBN tapes sought

PNP order decried as attack on free press

By Volt Contreas

IN A MOVE A TOP ABS-CBN news executive said could be an attempt to scare the media, the Philippine National Police yesterday ordered the network giant to submit its raw news footage of Thursday's march by rebel soldiers on the Peninsula Manila hotel and the ensuing standoff.

The media giant's dramatic, hour-by-hour coverage of the seven-hour standoff had raised questions among investigators, including suggestions that the network might have known in advance about the uprising.

"You are commanded to appear before the office of the Southern Metro Manila Criminal Investigation and Detection Team ... on Dec. 5, 2007 at 10 o'clock in the morning and bring with you a DVD copy of raw video footage [of the]

ABS-CBN/A8

Trillanes, 35 others charged with rebellion

By Leila B. Salaverria

THE DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE YESTERDAY filed rebellion charges against Sen. Antonio Trillanes IV, former Vice President Teofisto Guingona and 34 other military officers, Church officials and civilians in connection with the takeover of the Peninsula Manila hotel last week.

Also named in the charge sheet filed in the Makati Regional Trial Court were Brig. Gen. Danilo Lim, Bishop Emeritus Julio Labayen, Fr. Robert Reyes, former University of the Philippines president Francisco Nemenzo, artist Elizabeth Orteza Siguion-Reyna and Antonio Trillanes III, a brother of the senator.

No bail was recommended for the accused although Guingona, 79, was hospitalized due to an unspecified ailment and Labayen, 81, was freed upon the intercession of Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines president Angel Lagdameo.

Fourteen others were released pending further investigation.

Police said they were hunting at least four other officers who escaped after taking over the hotel on Thursday, including Marine Capt. Nicanor Faeldon, who had been implicated in past coup attempts. The government has put up a P1-million reward for Faeldon's capture.

Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez is

sued a hold-departure order on 50 persons named in an earlier police complaint in connection with the seven-hour Peninsula standoff. They included those named in the charge sheet and those temporarily released.

In a resolution, a DOJ panel led by Senior State Prosecutor Emmanuel Velasco dismissed claims that the hotel takeover was a spontaneous act following the walkout by Trillanes and Lim from a Makati court hearing.

"The civilian respondents" act in waiting for the group of Trillanes in Manila Peninsula hotel and eventually joining them while disregarding police advice, evading police blockade ... on

TRILLANES/A4



SEN. ANTONIO Trillanes IV finds himself in deeper trouble with the filing of rebellion charges against him on Monday.

'If I knew, I wouldn't have worn heels'



JOAN BONDOC
ABS-CBN tells the INQUIRER their story on the Peninsula Manila standoff on Monday at the network's office in Quezon City. From left, Ces Drilon, Rupert Ambil, Melanie Masecampo and Maria Ressa.

By Norman Bordadora

NEWS ANCHOR CES DRILON HAD a simple answer to police insinuations that the ABS-CBN network had advance knowledge of the mutiny staged last week by Sen. Antonio Trillanes IV.

"If I knew what was going to happen, I wouldn't have worn heels," said Drilon, who marched, huffing, with Trillanes and a band of soldiers from the Makati City Hall to the Peninsula Manila, where the group called for the ouster of President Macapagal-Arroyo.

"She also wouldn't have worn that animal print headband," ABS-CBN News Channel (ANC) anchor Pinky Webb added with a laugh, referring

IF I KNEW/A8



JPE, Ping tangle over 2 new Palace choppers

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

PRESIDENT MACAPAGAL-ARROYO is either too tired or scared to ride in old choppers because her office bought, not one, but two new Bell helicopters at P634 million each, so she could

JPE, PING/A13

Puno, cops summoned over media harassment

By Jocelyn R. Uy
and Christine O. Avendaño

THE COMMISSION ON HUMAN Rights is set to summon Interior Secretary Ronaldo Puno and Philippine National Police officials in response to a National Press Club complaint that journalists were illegally arrested in the aftermath of Thursday's hotel standoff.

The CHR expects PNP Director General Avelino Razon Jr. and Metro Manila Police Director Geary Barrios to attend a

PUNO/A8

UN kicks off global warming meet in Bali

BALI, INDONESIA—FACED with melting polar ice caps and worsening droughts, climate experts at a massive United Nations conference on Monday urged quick action toward a new international pact that would stem the increasingly destructive rise in world temperatures.

A key goal of the two-week conference, which opened with delegates from nearly 190 countries in attendance, will be to draw a skeptical United States into an agreement to cut emissions.

UN KICKS OFF/A4

Peninsula's Christmas tree glows again

By DJ Yap

THERE WAS NOTHING IN THE lobby of the Peninsula Manila hotel yesterday to indicate that it was the scene of a bizarre coup attempt in Makati City five days ago.

Gone were the elite SWAT teams that stormed the luxury hotel on Thursday to end a seven-hour standoff with a handful of mutinous troops who called on President Macapagal-Arroyo to step down. Gone too was the yellow police tape that ringed the main entrance.

The hotel's grand staircase had been cleaned of debris and

**SPANISH JUNKET
37 lawmakers join GMA party; who's paying for their trip?**

By Christian V. Esguerra,
Tara Quismundo, Norman
Bordadora in Manila
and Michael Lim Ubac in Madrid

WHO ARE THE LAWMAKERS now with President Macapagal-Arroyo on her three-country tour of Europe—and who paid for their trip?

Heeding the request of an opposition lawmaker, Speaker Jose de Venecia yesterday released the list of his colleagues who joined the presidential visits to France, Spain and the United Kingdom. (See complete list on Page A13.)

Leading the 34-strong congressional delegation was Deputy Speaker Amelita "Girlie" Villarosa, one of the President's most trusted lieutenants who had earlier admitted distributing cash gifts in Malacañang on Oct. 11.

The list also showed that Quezon City Rep. Mary Ann Sison was traveling with a certain Evangeline Evangelista while Masbate Rep. Rizalina Seachon-Lanete was with her son Mayor Josur.

It was also one of the year's largest presidential delegations to book a chartered flight.

A contingent of close to 200 individuals left with Ms Arroyo and her family on Saturday night on board a chartered Philippine Airlines plane to France, Spain and the United Kingdom. They included Cabinet members, three senators, 34 representatives and a few of their family members.

The PAL flight had 192 passengers on board, according to the flight manifest obtained by the INQUIRER.

Ms Arroyo's other foreign trips this year had entourages of no more than 100 individuals.

37 LAWMAKERS/A13

JPE, Ping tangle over 2 new Palace choppers

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

PRESIDENT MACAPAGAL-ARROYO is either too tired or scared to ride in old choppers because her office bought, not one, but two new Bell helicopters at P634 million each, so she could

JPE, PING/A13



WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: The eastern sections of Luzon and Visayas will experience mostly cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers. The rest of the country will have partly cloudy to cloudy skies with isolated rainshowers or thunderstorms.

Metro Manila	Partly Cloudy	Hilago/Bacolod	Partly Cloudy
Dagupan	Partly Cloudy	Roxas	Partly Cloudy
Tuguegarao	Mostly Cloudy	Cebu	Mostly Cloudy
La Union	Partly Cloudy	Tacloban	Mostly Cloudy
Clerk Zoo	Partly Cloudy	Gen. Santos	Partly Cloudy
Tagaytay	Partly Cloudy	Zambanga	Partly Cloudy
Logon	Mostly Cloudy	Cagayan de Oro	Partly Cloudy
Calapan	Partly Cloudy	Davao	Partly Cloudy

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Second FRONT PAGE

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This time, Danding loses case

Sandigan junks anew Cojuangco bid for 72% of UCPB

By Jocelyn R. Uy

FOOD AND BEVERAGE TYCOON Eduardo "Danding" Cojuangco Jr. has failed anew to recover his shares in United Coconut Planters Bank which were believed to have been illegally acquired using the coconut levy funds.

In a nine-page resolution, the Sandiganbayan First Division junked Cojuangco's motion for reconsideration seeking a reversal of the partial summary judgment the court issued in July 2003 affirming the government's ownership of 72.2 percent of

the shares in UCPB.

The Presidential Commission on Good Government (PCGG) estimated the value of the shares at P100 billion in 2003.

Last week, the Sandiganbayan handed Cojuangco a victory, however, when it dismissed a case filed by the PCGG seeking to recover from the businessman 20 percent of the shares in food and beverage giant San Miguel Corp., which Cojuangco heads as chair, and which were alleged to be owned by the coconut farmers.

"The points raised by Cojuangco have already been passed upon in the resolutions of this court, including the court's partial summary judgment, and more particularly the resolution of June 5, 2007," the Sandiganbayan said.

In the June 5 ruling, the Sandiganbayan concluded the forfeiture of Cojuangco's shares in UCPB by making the case "final and appealable" to the Supreme Court.

The Sandiganbayan also reiterated in its latest resolution that it could no longer grant Cojuangco a full-blown trial for lack of "triable issues" that would "necessitate the presentation of evidence by the parties respecting their allegations and defenses."

In his petition to overturn the court's earlier rulings, Cojuangco maintained that he was the rightful owner of the UCPB shares as shown by a May 1975 agreement signed by himself and Sen. Edgardo Angara, former attorney-in-fact of the then UCPB owner, the late Pedro Cojuangco.

But the court dismissed his claim

and stated that this had already been settled in the partial summary judgment it rendered in 2003.

Also, it affirmed anew its earlier pronouncement that Presidential Decree 755 issued by the late dictator Ferdinand Marcos authorizing the Philippine Coconut Authority to buy a bank using the coconut levy funds for the benefit of the Filipino coconut farmers was illegal.

The PCA was created by Presidential Decree 232 on June 30, 1973, to develop the coconut industry. Its governing board was chaired by then Defense Minister Juan Ponce Enrile with Cojuangco and the late Maria Clara Lobregat as members.

The PCA controlled 72.2 percent of UCPB in 1975 but the government sequestered 94.2 percent of the bank.

Comelec can't purge 2M from voters' list

By Beverly T. Natividad

THE COMMISSION OF ELECTIONS has yet to cleanse the voters list of some two million "double registrants," a senior official of the Comelec said yesterday.

Ferdinand Rafanan, Comelec director for the National Capital Region, said many of the double listings occurred because voters changed residence but failed to cancel their registration.

"I don't have the accurate figure but more or less my estimate is two million," said Rafanan in an interview with INQUIRER.

Rafanan said the poll body is having difficulty weeding out these double registrants because it would involve individual petitions for exclusion in courts.

"For me, this is not only an impossible solution but also an impractical one," said Rafanan.

The Comelec does not have enough manpower to file and attend court hearings for all two million double registrants, he added.

Rafanan said he believes the Comelec as a collegial body has the authority to order the cancellation of the second registration even without securing a court order.

However, there are some legal interpretations that say the blanket cancellation of the second and subsequent registrations may impede a citizen's right to vote; that case-to-case petitions may be necessary.

Rafanan reminded voters that the correct procedure to take when transferring residences is to ask the election officers in their new locations to transfer their first registrations, and not to register anew.

For example, a voter who previously lived in Manila then moved to Quezon City must ask the QC election officer to transfer his old registration to his new location.

WHAT'S INSIDE

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ARMM police chief told to explain to Comelec

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■ 2 PINAYS charged in HK human trafficking case

/A7

Peso's big rise gives OFW kin headaches

MANILA'S MALLS ARE ABUZZ WITH Christmas carols and glitzy decorations but Marlene Isleta has little festive cheer.

A strong Philippine peso and a weak US dollar means Isleta has less cash in her pocket after receiving the remittance money her husband, a waiter on a luxury cruise ship, sends her every month.

"The money is really tight. Christmas is just another day for me. I'll be hiding from my godchildren that day," she said, on a break from her office job in Manila's financial district.

Isleta's husband is one of an estimated 8 million Filipinos, or around 10 percent of the population, who work overseas due to a lack of opportunities at home and whose remittances have driven the domestic economy to a 20-year high.

Best performing

The Philippines is the fourth-largest recipient of remittances in the world after India, Mexico and China.

Overseas Filipino Workers, treated to their own visa line at Manila's international airport, have fueled a local spending boom through their payments, estimated to hit a new record of \$14.7 billion this year, 15 percent higher than last year's peak.

The monthly inflows have also made the peso Asia's best performing currency this year, up nearly 15 percent against the dollar.

But this means that overseas workers' foreign currency salaries are translating into less pesos and these workers are having to send home more money every month to

provide the same amount of pesos for their families' fixed monthly budgets.

Many remittances still come from the United States, but there are also significant flows from countries which have a dollar peg, such as Hong Kong and Gulf states.

The peso has also risen over 8 percent against sterling since the start of the year and two percent against the euro.

To make ends meet, Filipinos based overseas are taking on second jobs, working overtime or getting loans. Back home, families often have to cut back on spending.

Work, work, work

In Manteca California, Donato Tino works overtime at two jobs to send an extra \$200 a month home to his wife and two children.

The 38-year-old works in a petrol station and an electronics firm. In the Philippines, he was an X-ray technician but he would need to return to get employment in a US hospital.

"I don't have time to study. I have to work and work," Tino said in a telephone interview.

The central bank has tried to temper the peso's rise but it has run up its biggest loss in over a decade doing so and the cost of keeping the currency in check is now too expensive.

The government has cut wharfage fees and removed travel tax for exporters but it's little consolation and exporters have slashed growth estimates for this year to 4.5-5.5 percent from an original forecast of 10 percent.

Reuters

Batasan blast suspect out on bail

By Alcuin Papa

FORMER TUBURAN, BASILAN MAYOR Hadjarun Jamiri was released from the Camp Crame custodial center past 7 p.m. last night after filing bail.

His lawyer, Eduardo Ariba, said he posted an P80,000 bail bond for charges of murder and frustrated murder in connection with the Nov. 13 Batasan bombing.

Ariba said his client is denying the involvement of Mujib and Benjamin Hata-

man, and former Basilan Rep. Gerry Salappudin in the bombing. They will file the necessary pleadings at the next hearing.

Ariba added that his client's affidavit detailing the supposed involvement of the Hatamans and Salappudin in the bombing was "signed involuntarily. He was forced to sign that affidavit."

Five persons, including Basilan Rep. Wahab Akbar, died in the blast and several others were wounded.

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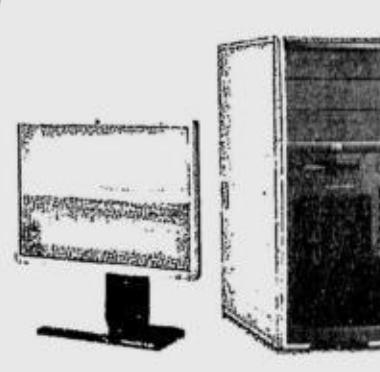
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Where's Bedol? ARMM police chief told to explain to Comelec

THE COMMISSION ON ELECTIONS has asked the police chief of Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) to explain his failure to arrest Maguindanao election supervisor Lintang Bedol.

The Comelec has invited Chief Supt. Joel R. Goltiao, the PNP regional director of the ARMM, to face the poll body on Dec. 11 and explain why he was not able to serve the warrant of arrest on Bedol, which the Comelec issued on Oct. 23.

The warrant of arrest was based on the Comelec's Au-

gust 2007 ruling which found him guilty of indirect contempt. His conviction was based, among other things, on his failure to appear before the Comelec despite re-

peated summons to answer questions on alleged cheating activities in Maguindanao.

Goltiao was not able to serve the warrant of arrest to

the Maguindanao poll supervisor claiming in a Nov. 2 report to the Comelec that police were not able to track him down in Maguindanao. Beverly T. Natividad

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Rebel with wacky wig identified as Binay security man

By DJ Yap

THE REBEL SOLDIER WITH THE WACKY WIG in last week's takeover of the Peninsula Manila hotel in Makati was a security escort of Mayor Jejomar Binay.

Binay, who heads the United Opposition (UNO), himself admitted yesterday that former Army Cpl. Elmer Colon was one of the City Hall employees who joined the group of Sen. Antonio Trillanes IV, but made it clear that he did not condone the escort's actions and he would be placed under preventive suspension.

"I did not know City Hall employees would be there. I cannot be blamed for actions they took on their own ... Let's talk straight here. Just because they

joined (Trillanes) shouldn't mean they can start making links (to me)," Binay said.

The city's human resources department also identified one Sonny Madarang as another City Hall security guard who was among those arrested by police, based on the names published in the papers.

Colon, who has remained in hiding, was demoted from technical sergeant in the Army's Scout Rangers for his involvement in the 2003 Oakwood mutiny, which was also led by Trillanes. He retired from the military service in May last year,

"Believe me when I say that I cannot recognize this person even without his wig on," Binay said in



BINAY

a press conference at City Hall.

Colon was seen on television wearing a wig during the seven-hour hotel standoff and standing



COLON

behind the rebel leaders when they called for President Macapagal-Arroyo's resignation.

"From what I was told, he

(Colon) did not report for work on that day," the mayor said. "I probably would have asked [him] not to go if he had asked my permission."

Binay said Colon and the other unnamed employees would be suspended, as was customary for those facing criminal charges, once City Hall had verified their identities and job status.

He said he had received information that Colon was assigned to him, but that he could not recognize him in photos shown to him. He said he coordinated matters only with his chief of security.

The mayor said he had been forthright from the start in cooperating with the police officers looking into the alleged in-

volve ment of Colon and other city employees.

Binay pointed out that he immediately confirmed to them that Colon was an employee, and that he even volunteered the information that some of the names in the list of civilians who were arrested were City Hall personnel.

While he believed in Trillanes' cause, Binay said he disagreed with his methods.

He shrugged off criticisms over his absence at the Peninsula, saying he felt "left out," as no one from the local or national police had apprised him of developments.

"Why should I squeeze myself where I wasn't wanted?" Binay said.

Trillanes, 35 others charged with rebellion

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only shows their concerted effort and intention to coalesce with them toward the attainment of a common objective," it said.

"Thus, their participation cannot be viewed as merely spontaneous and isolated, on the contrary, (it) reveal(s) a conspiracy and mutual intention to overthrow the government," the panel said.

Elements of rebellion

The DOJ panel also said the elements of rebellion were present when the group took up arms against the government, led a public uprising and announced that they were ousting President Macapagal-Arroyo to form a new government.

The panel noted that the statement read by Lim, former commander of a Scout Ranger Regiment, after he arrived at the Peninsula called for a change in leadership and for the military and the police to withdraw their support from Ms Arroyo.

It said that Guingona, in apparent "anticipation of their victory," raised a toast and said "This is like Edsa."

"The foregoing bears the earmark of public uprising and taking up arms against the government," the panel said.

"Walking out of the court in the midst of the trial and having themselves surrounded by armed men in public does not

only display respondents' tumultuous act of disrespect to the court but also shows their open hostility against the government," the panel said.

A copy of Lim's statement was found in the hotel. High-powered firearms, ammunition and explosives were recovered at the Peninsula's second floor, the panel said.

Escape plan

Video footage also showed some of the respondents marching to the hotel while calling on people to withdraw support from the government.

Authorities also seized a handwritten note showing Trillanes' escape plan from the Makati court. The notes contain the number of teams and their members, their pre-designed positions, the timeframe, the distribution of firearms, the route they were going to take and the rules of engagement in case of a confrontation.

"This escape plan clearly shows premeditated planning by the respondents. This was hatched not only by the military respondents headed by Lim and Trillanes but also in coordination with the civilian respondents," the panel said.

Threat remains

Gonzalez said that although the 36 accused, plus John and Jane Does, were charged with rebellion, some of them could be later found to be accomplices or accessories.

Gonzalez said the threat from

Charged with rebellion

- Former Vice President Teofisto T. Guingona Jr.
- Sen. Antonio F. Trillanes IV
- Brig. Gen. Danilo P. Lim
- Bishop Julio Labayan
- Rev. Father Robert P. Reyes
- Capt. Gary C. Alejano
- Capt. Segundino P. Orfano Jr.
- LTSG Manuel DG Cabochan
- LTSG James A. Layug
- LTJG Arturo Pascua Jr.
- LT Eugene G. Peralta
- LT Andy G. Torrato
- 1LT Billy S. Pascua
- 1LT Jonnel P. Sangalang
- ENS Armand G. Pontejos
- J.V. Bautista
- Arjee C. Guevarra
- Franciso Nemenzo
- Julius J. Mesa
- Cezari Yassir T. Gonzales
- CPL Clecarde D. Dahan
- PFC Juanito Jilbury
- PFC Emmanuel C. Tirador.
- PFC German M. Linde

the supporters or followers of those behind the siege of the Peninsula remained.

"We don't know if there are sleepers in their ranks. We need more intelligence on the part of the armed forces, the police, most especially the armed

Ordered released for further investigation

- El Cid C. Pajardo
- Herman T. Laurel
- Leoni Toledo Jr.
- Evangeline B. Mendoza
- Jose A. Albert
- Eduardo R. Castro
- Ferdinand P. Sandoval
- Julio Y. Ancheta
- Stella D. Guingona
- Maamor D. Lanto
- Romeo S. Dacles
- Ryan Z. Custodio
- Edgardo Tulayay, and
- Ray A. Linaac

forces because these people are under them," he said.

Gonzalez said that Trillanes could not be considered as someone who had been discarded because he had followers, including some military officers.

But he also said Trillanes had

probably begun to "hallucinate" considering that had the revolt succeeded, Trillanes and Lim would have led the transition government, based on documents recovered from the hotel.

Gonzalez said that some of those named in the police complaint were Senate employees who were just told to go to the hotel and were prevented from leaving during the siege.

Those ordered released were El Cid Fajardo, Herman Tiu Laurel, Leonido Toledo Jr., Evangeline Mendoza, Jose Albert, Eduardo Castro, Ferdinand Sandoval, Julio Ancheta, Stella Guingona, Maamor Lanto, Romeo Dacles, Ryan Custodio, Edgardo Tulayay and Ray Linaac.

Gonzalez said authorities were checking a "money trail" to determine the identities of those who had bankrolled the hotel takeover. He also said the possible "complicity" of the Makati City government in the hotel siege was being checked.

"No adventurism of this nature will happen if there are no people behind who will be funding them," he told reporters.

Gonzalez linked the money men to the people reportedly recruited from Metro Manila communities for P200 each and who were to be transported outside the Peninsula Manila to support the soldiers and civilians who had holed up inside.

"We want to know who were the funders or who were the conduits of the funders to them. Unfortunately, these people now are hiding. We cannot get anybody from Parola or from Payatas anymore," he said.

Weapons

Gonzalez said that based on witness' accounts, the guns appeared to have been hidden in the Makati City Hall bathrooms because the people involved in the incident were seen going to and from the bathroom and the courtroom prior to the walkout.

If it is true there were weapons that were smuggled inside the building, with Mayor (Jejomar) Binay even having reported to the police he has death threats, how could these firearms have been smuggled inside?" he said.

Gonzalez also wondered how the firearms were brought to the Peninsula.

"Was there a connivance with the security of Manila Peninsula? Why is that when Trillanes arrived at the Manila Peninsula, all the cameras were already in place?" he asked.

As for the reported investigation of the participation of the media, he said journalists would only be held responsible if they were shown to have conspired with those who had participated in the takeover.

Peninsula's Manila Christmas tree glows again

From page A1

wreckage. A glass door shattered by an armored personnel carrier had been boarded up with cream-colored planks and decorated with a large Christmas wreath of poinsettias and golden bells.

A giant Christmas tree once again dominated the ornate lobby where guests sipped coffee or tinkered with their laptops in opulent lounges with fine linen dinner settings. A pianist played Christmas tunes on a grand piano on the mezzanine floor as a stream of guests checked in.

"It's a very beautiful hotel," said Ying Lian Wu, a tourist from Jianxi, China, who is enjoying a weeklong vacation with her family.

"No fear. Why do we need to fear?" she said when asked if she was concerned about what last week's tumultuous events.

"It's great to be back ... it's like a second home," said American Ramon Linan, a Northwest Airlines flight steward.

Back in business

The Peninsula, considered the "jewel" of Metro Manila's hotel circuit, is back in business.

"While last Thursday's events were certainly a confusing and distressing experience for everyone, we are extremely pleased that everything is back to normal," said David Batchelor, the general manager.

Batchelor said the hotel had spent about P5 million replac-

ing marble tiles at the lobby and plastering and repainting walls to obliterate bullet marks and other signs of the assault.

Total losses for the Peninsula are estimated at P46 million from lost business and the cost of the repairs.

Batchelor placed hotel occupancy at 51 percent but said this was expected to hit 68 percent by Thursday. The hotel was 90 percent booked when a handful of mutinous troops barged in last week.

Markets unfazed

Financial markets also appeared unfazed by last week's mutiny. The stock market ended 1.35 percent up at 3,626.88 points while the peso surged to

42.32 against the dollar, up from a close of 42.75 on Thursday. (See story in Business, Page B1).

"The coup was just a sort of a press conference with no real threat," said Astro del Castillo, director of the Association of Securities Analysts of the Philippines.

"Today, the government is in control, there is no clear and present danger. There are also things to cheer about, for example there is a possibility of another US rate cut and oil prices are down."

Peter Wallace, president of a consultancy firm, said events like the botched coup were part of the rough-and-tumble politics of the Philippines but it could have some effect on direct investment.

"It's certainly going to cause them to pause in their thinking,"

Wallace said. "It's not the local guy, it's the head office back in America or London, where they really don't understand these kind of shenanigans."

"Someone in London watching BBC News, seeing the front of what's supposed to be a very safe five-star hotel just wiped off, is going to say, hey my board isn't going to allow this investment."

Tourism unscathed

But Tourism Secretary Joseph Ace Durano, who graced the Peninsula's reopening, said he didn't expect the failed mutiny to have any long-term effect on the country's tourism industry.

In fact, Durano said, tour operators had reported no cancel-

lations of group tours until the end of the year. He voiced confidence the number of foreign tourist arrivals to still hit three million this year.

To show that things have returned to normal, Armed Forces Chief of Staff Gen. Hermogenes Esperon Jr. said he and Philippine National Police Director General Avelino Razon would meet at the Peninsula soon.

Even while troops remained on red alert in Metro Manila and nearby provinces, Esperon yesterday left for a three-day trip to Malaysia to attend an international aerospace and maritime exhibit. He was accompanied by his wife Lorna and other military officials. *With reports by Tarra Quismundo and Reuters*

UN kicks off global warming meet in Bali

From page A1

sions of carbon dioxide and other so-called greenhouse gases.

The US delegation declared it would not be a "roadblock" to a new agreement, but Washington remains opposed to steps many other countries support, such as mandatory emissions cuts by rich nations and a target for limiting the rise in global temperatures.

The US position suffered a blow on Monday when the new Australian prime minister signed papers to ratify the Kyoto Protocol climate pact. The move leaves the United States—the world's top emitter of greenhouse gases—as the sole industrial power not to have joined.

Conference leaders urged delegates to move quickly to combat climate change.

"The eyes of the world are

upon you. There is a huge responsibility for Bali to deliver," Yvo de Boer, the executive secretary of the conference, said. "The world now expects a quantum leap forward."

Dramatic action

The conference kicked off amid growing global momentum for dramatic action to stop rising temperatures that scientists say could lead to swamping of coastal areas and islands by higher oceans, the wiping out of species, economic havoc and a spike in natural disasters such as storms, fires and droughts.

The Bali meeting will be the first major conference of its kind since former US Vice President Al Gore—due to arrive next week—and a UN scientific council won the Nobel Peace Prize in October for their environmental work.

The immediate aim will be to

launch negotiations toward a pact to replace the Kyoto Protocol when it expires in 2012, and set an agenda for the talks and a deadline. The United Nations says such an agreement should be concluded by 2009 in order to have a system in place in time.

Among the most contentious issues ahead will be whether emission cuts should be mandatory or voluntary.

Also to be tackled will be to what extent up-and-coming economies like China and India will have to rein in their skyrocketing emissions, and how to help the world's poorest countries adapt to a worsening climate.

US on the defensive

The American delegation was clearly on the defensive in Bali, presenting a statement detailing the ways the United States is fighting global warming with

out submitting to mandatory emissions targets.

"We're not here to be a roadblock," insisted Harlan L. Watson, the senior US climate negotiator. "We're committed to a successful conclusion, and we're going to work very constructively to make that happen."

Confronted with the scientific reports of the past year, the administration of US President George W. Bush has signaled a willingness to play a larger role in the negotiations, and UN officials agree a post-Kyoto framework that Washington will go along with.

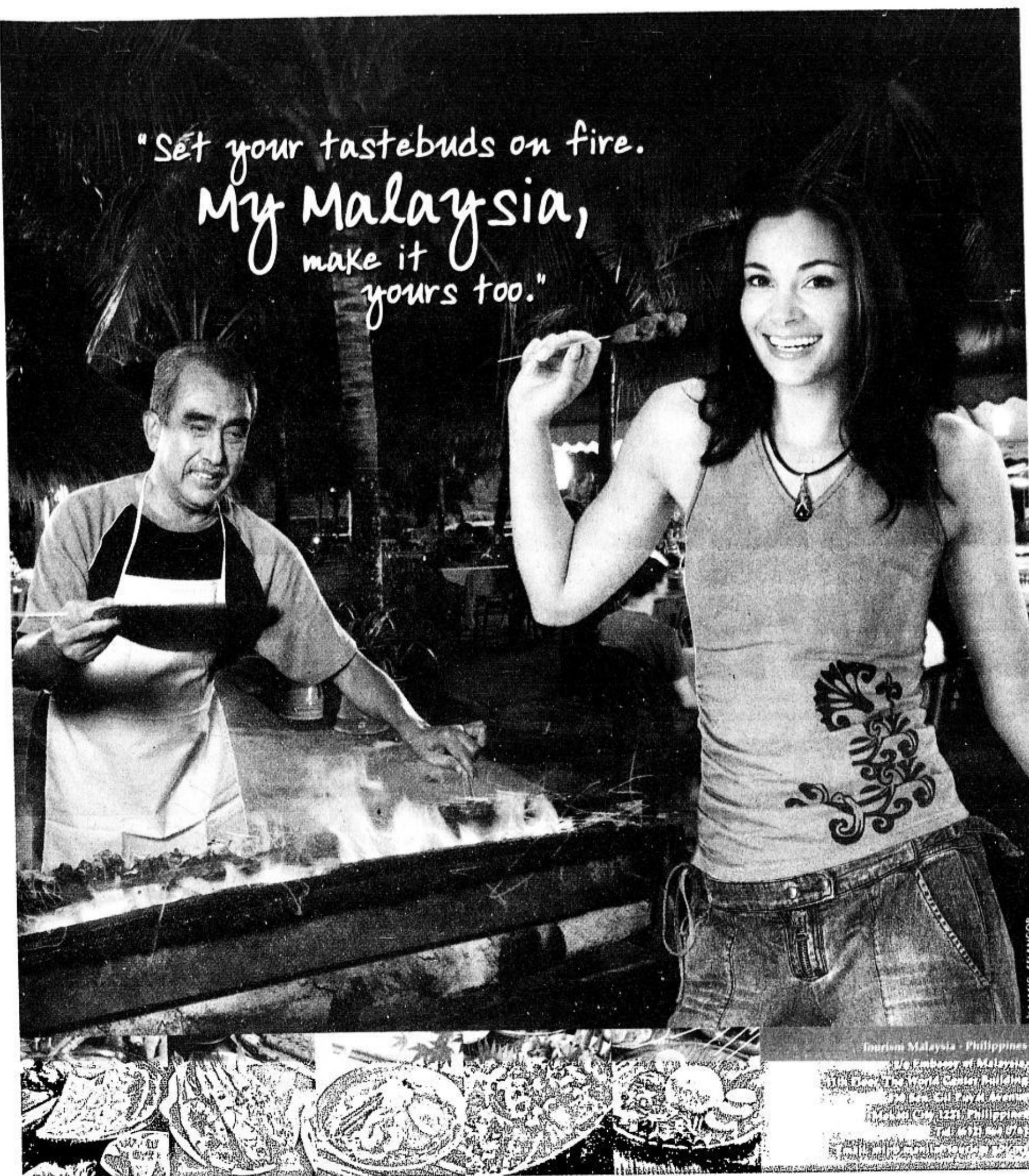
Australia abandoned the anti-Kyoto alliance with the United States on Monday when new Prime Minister Kevin Rudd signed the paperwork to ratify the pact.

Delegates in Bali erupted in applause when Australia's delegate, Howard Bamsey, told the

plenary that Canberra was jumping on board.

"I think that the long applause reflected people's appreciation for the courage shown by Australia to take this dramatically different position to engage even more strongly with the international community on the question of climate change," De Boer said

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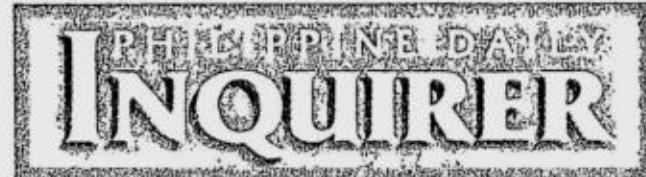
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2 Pinays charged in HK human trafficking case

By Philip C. Tuba

HONG KONG—THE TRIAL OF two Filipinas in what government officials said was a "landmark" human trafficking case began here Monday.

Jennifer B. Nicdao, 27, and Angelita D. Amparado, 39, were charged at the District Court with trafficking in persons and aiding and abetting the breach of condition of stay after they allegedly brought to Hong Kong in July five Filipinas who ended up working as prostitutes in the city's red light district in Wan Chai.

Government prosecutor Edward Le Breton Laskey said the two women were the first Filipinas charged with human trafficking outside the Philippines. The accused pleaded not guilty to the charges and their trial is expected to last until Thursday.

"This is the first case that Filipinas were prosecuted outside the Philippines in relation to trafficking of people. This has not happened in Singapore or the Middle East," said Laskey during a break in the hearing.

"I am told that officials in the Philippines, including an adviser to the President, are very interested in this case," he added.

Laskey said that he had handled cases of Thai or Chinese traffickers bringing into Hong Kong women for prostitution but this was the first time that he had encountered

Filipinas being charged for the crime.

"This is a landmark case because, if the authorities before charged only the trafficked women they arrested, this time, they're going after the traffickers themselves," said Vice Consul Val Roque, head of the Assistance of Nationals section of the Philippines Consulate.

The five complainants in the case had initially sought the help of the Philippine consulate before going to the police. The police then raided several bars in Wan Chai on Aug. 4 and invited for questioning at least 35 Filipinas, including Nicdao and Amparado.

According to Laskey, a certain Loida approached the first two victims in June and offered them work in Hong Kong.

Loida then introduced the women to Amparado, who allegedly told them that they would work as entertainers in a club, and this could include providing sexual services to customers, so that they could later pay the P60,000 for their plane ticket and their hotel accommodation.

According to one of the victims, the "loan" of P60,000 had to be repaid within three months after they arrived in Hong Kong.

There was supposed to be a written contract and Amparado allegedly even threatened one

of the victims that she could end up in jail if she failed to pay up.

"(Amparado) told her that

she could earn money by drinking with customers but if she wanted to earn more money

and repay the loan quickly, then she should have sex with customers," Laskey said.

The women earned their keep by getting commissions from the drinks their customers bought at the bar or by walking the streets to look for customers

who would pay for sex.

Nicdao was arrested on the morning of Aug. 4 and she denied the accusation while Amparado was also arrested on the same day. She refused to answer any question during the police investigation.



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ABS-CBN tapes sought; PNP order decried as attack on free press

From page A1

March," PNP Director Edgardo Doromal said in his order to Maria Ressa, head of the ABS-CBN news and current affairs department.

"FAIL NOT UNDER THE PENALTY OF LAW," the order said in bold letters.

In a statement, Ressa branded the order as apparently part of a continuing attempt to "intimidate and harass journalists" and indicated a "gradual erosion of press freedom" in the country.

Reached later on the phone, Ressa said the network was still studying its options and had not yet decided whether to comply with the order.

"We want to cooperate but we want to make sure what we are being asked to do," she said, noting that the network had been getting "confusing" signals from the authorities.

A senior government official, speaking to the INQUIRER the other day, had said the refusal of members of the ABS-CBN crew to heed police orders to vacate the hotel raised questions about whether they were there to report a news event or were conspiring with the rebels and "obstructing justice."

The ABS-CBN crew was not the only media group that refused to heed the police ultimatum to withdraw. About 30 other journalists from various organizations also held their ground so they could report to the public what was happening inside the hotel.

ABS-CBN policy

The PNP Criminal Investigation and Detection Group ordered Ressa to appear and produce the video tapes at the Southern Police District headquarters in Fort Bonifacio, Taguig City.

Doromal specifically ordered Ressa to bring with her raw footage of the march

of Trillanes, Brig. Gen. Danilo Lim and 13 other members of Magdalo soldiers and civilian supporters.

In an interview earlier yesterday, Ressa, who also furnished the INQUIRER with a copy of the CIDG order, maintained that "as a policy we rarely release raw video."

"What you'll get (is) what was in the public airwaves, what we've aired," she said.

Later in a statement, Ressa insisted that "in no instance did ABS-CBN ever 'obstruct justice' or prevent authorities from taking action in Thursday's stand-off in Makati.

"ABS-CBN continued its live coverage because the public has a right to know," she said. "We calculated the risks, took precautions for our team, and made the choice to stay."

"We did our job—to make sure that whatever actions both sides take, they are accountable to the people," Ressa stressed, adding:

"Statements from law enforcement and government officials now seem confused: As some officials tell us there is no probe on ABS-CBN, I receive a subpoena 'commanding' me to appear at a police hearing on Dec. 5.

Erosion of press freedom

"It seems attempts to intimidate and harass journalists continue. These actions show a gradual erosion of press freedom and degrade our country's democratic processes," Ressa said.

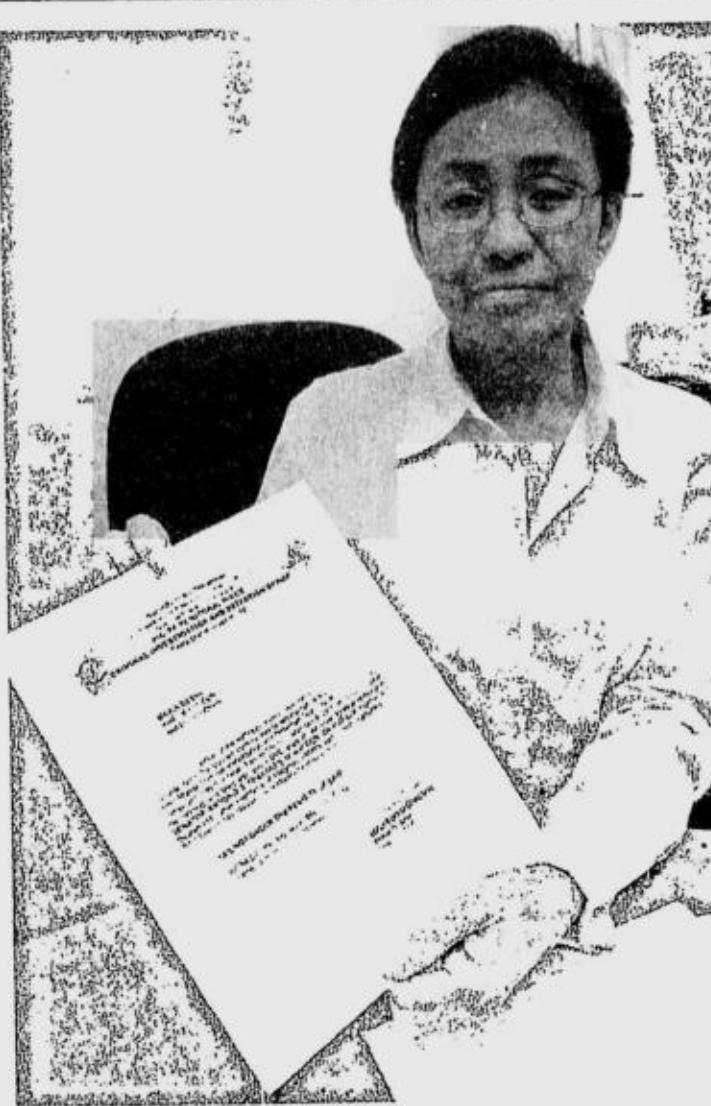
A day after the bloodless siege, the network issued a statement condemning the "illegal arrest" of the more than 30 journalists and cameramen who were inside the hotel during the assault.

Claiming they were acting on suspicions that some rebels had disguised themselves as members of the press, police then manacled some of the journalists and

then took all of them to Camp Bagong Diwa in Bicutan for "processing"—along with the targets of the police assault: Trillanes, the other soldiers and their civilian counterparts.

Ressa said there were 12 ABS-CBN personnel among those arrested, including TV reporter Ces Drilon. The rest were producers, engineers, drivers and researchers.

Ressa reiterated the network's stand that "the arrest of 12 of our journalists along with our other media colleagues is



ABS-CBN news and current affairs chief Maria Ressa holds up a copy of the PNP order to appear before police investigators on Wednesday. JOAN BONDOC

unconstitutional."

'Nothing to hide'

"We have nothing to hide," Ressa said in the interview. "All I can say is we did our jobs. Did the security forces do theirs?"

"I feel that some of the questions that have been thrown up (by the investigators)—and which reporters would pick up—are all without basis. I don't know what's suspicious about (my staff) doing their jobs well."

In the same interview held at Ressa's office, Drilon said, "The

decision (for the ABS-CBN team) to stay was based on our reading of the situation.

"In previous instances, the (2003) Oakwood mutiny, the 1989 coup, deadlines passed without an assault. And they (the rebels holed up at the Peninsula) had very little arms to put up an effective resistance."

"So where was the danger?" Drilon asked. "If it's tear gas—and our office told us that tear gas will be used and gave as a choice (to leave or stay put)—my instinct was to go to

the bathroom and get wet tissues or towels. It was not to leave."

Call for probe

Ressa recalled that when ABS-CBN got a call from the authorities asking that it pull out its news team from the hotel, she conferred with the head of news gathering, Charie Villa.

"What was the danger? We all covered Oakwood, all the different mutinies here. They were not going to bomb the building," she said.

Sen. Juan Ponce Enrile told reporters the government should look closer into the franchise of television and radio networks to determine whether they had overstepped the boundaries of their broadcast license in their coverage of Trillanes' botched takeover of the Peninsula Manila.

Enrile stressed that unlike the print media, TV and radio networks were covered by more rigid rules because they operated on a franchise granted by Congress, which was why the government had greater control over their operations.

Need to be careful

Enrile said the government should look at the coverage of the standoff by the broadcast networks to determine if they had violated their franchise.

The event was covered by practically all the major TV and radio outlets in its entirety, allowing the Trillanes group to monitor the police assault operations on the hotel's TVs.

Enrile said this was why broadcast stations should be more careful in their coverage, especially if it involved the overthrow of the state.

Enrile said he could not say whether the broadcast stations had indeed violated their franchise.

"This has to be looked into first before we make any conclusions," he said. With a report from Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

'If I knew, I wouldn't have worn heels'

From page A1

to what Drilon was wearing on her head during the march.

Members of the ABS-CBN news staff spoke to the INQUIRER yesterday to deny allegations that the network had been tipped off about the plan of Trillanes and his group to use the Peninsula to stage their outburst against Ms Arroyo.

A network field producer who was at the hotel explained how ABS-CBN was able to mobilize its resources and personnel quickly and deliver a blow-by-blow account of the Nov. 29 hotel drama.

"The secret was past show biz setups for Star News," Rupert Ambil said, referring to the entertainment segment of the network's TV Patrol news broadcast. "I knew the ins and outs of the hotel," he said.

We did what we had to do'

"Once or twice, we were able to get ahead because we knew where to go," he added.

Ambil said he was to set up a quick live broadcast of the Peninsula "situation" using the

network's outside-broadcast van that had rushed to the scene.

"That's our job. That's what we do," Ambil said.

Maria Ressa, head of ABS-CBN news and current affairs, said it appeared that the network was being investigated for doing the job expected of journalists covering a crucial moment in the country's history.

"We were doing what we needed to do, which is to show the event, a pivotal event that had an effect nationwide," Ressa said in the interview she and those involved in the network's coverage of the Peninsula incident gave at her office.

No basis for suspicions

Did the journalists collude with the alleged mutineers by providing them with the human shields to hold the cops at bay?

"No journalist will choose to die for any newsmaker," Ressa said.

Ambil denied allegations that the ABS-CBN crew had already set up for a live broadcast even before Trillanes, Lim and the Magdalo soldiers arrived and holed up at the hotel.

"The reason why there is suspicion is because they are trying to make it appear that we were already there before the start. In fact, Channel 7 got there first before us. We even arrived late," Ambil said.

Segment producer Melanie Masecampo said Ambil's claim could be verified with the Pen's own executives.

"We asked permission to set up from Grace Lim, (one of) Manila Pen's PRs," Masecampo said.

"When Lim had his presscon (calling for Ms Arroyo's resignation), we had yet to set up," she said.

Long cables

Regarding police remarks that the ABS-CBN group managed to bring in a considerable length of cables—a sign of being prepared—Masecampo said: "We always bring very long cables. Even if we cover in Tanay, we'd have enough cable."

Tanay, Rizal, is where deposed President Joseph Estrada was detained under house arrest. It is also there, in Camp Capinpin, where other rebel of-

ficers are now being held. Both were sites of many remote ABS-CBN broadcast setups.

Drilon said she had just arrived at the Makati courthouse when Trillanes and Lim staged their walkout.

"My first live broadcast was shortly before 11 a.m. over radio. We were still on JP Rizal Avenue," Drilon said.

About her shoes, Drilon said: "Will I cover (a mutiny in heels)?"

She said she walked in high heels from the Makati courtroom to the corner of Makati Avenue and Paseo de Roxas.

"That's a long time," she said, adding that she changed to more comfortable slip-ons later after her crew found the slippers inside their vehicle.

No prior knowledge

Webb and ABS-CBN business reporter Charo Logarta had been covering another event in Makati before linking up with Drilon to cover the unfolding drama.

All three reporters said they didn't have prior knowledge that Trillanes would walk out of the

court with Lim and several other coaccused to march on the Pen.

"If we knew, we would have brought bottled water with us," Webb said.

"We were just using our cell phones to go live on ANC," she added.

Webb said that during the walk on Makati Avenue, she only realized that they were going to the Pen when one of the Magdalo soldiers said they were about to turn toward the hotel.

"I thought we were going to the Ninoy Aquino monument," Webb said.

Midnight talk

Charie Villa, head of ABS-CBN's news gathering team, said senior journalist Drilon was assigned to cover the court hearing because Lim was going to testify.

"We also received reports that (Sen. Gregorio) Honasan would take the stand," Villa said.

"That's big news," she added.

Drilon admitted that she managed to talk to Trillanes over the phone on the eve of the incident.

Instead of getting confirma-

tion of a tip that he was about to do something drastic, Drilon said Trillanes even said he was still thinking of whether to attend the hearing.

"Someone, a source, had told me the day before to watch out for Trillanes. He was up to something. It was something which I didn't give much importance to," Drilon said.

"Then in the evening, another coworker told me to ask Trillanes if he was really up to something. So I called him up at midnight," she added.

Drilon said she stayed up late on Wednesday night because of a corporate awards event at the network.

"What is it that you're going to do?" Drilon said she asked Trillanes.

She said Trillanes tried to downplay the tip she had received.

"I then asked him if he'd be attending the hearing. He said, 'You know, I'm still thinking about it.' That was how the phone conversation ended," she said.

From page A1

public hearing Thursday on the NPC complaint.

"I believe they will have to be summoned to the public hearing to give their side," CHR Commissioner Eligio Mallari said at a press conference yesterday.

Decrying the "illegal arrests" of over 30 media practitioners, NPC president Roy Mabasa filed a three-page complaint against the police officials for allegedly compromising press freedom and committing human rights violations against the journalists as individuals.

The media people were handcuffed and taken to police headquarters at Camp Bagong Diwa in Bicutan, Taguig City, for interrogation

before they were released following the Peninsula Manila siege.

The NPC complaint said:

- There were no clear and valid reasons for the arrests, making them arbitrary.

- The arrests were done in an "abusive and inhumane" manner, handcuffing the journalists—both men and women—with plastic cables as though they were "suspects in a crime that doesn't exist."

- The media people were not properly informed of their rights upon their arrest, supposedly for obstruction of justice as later disclosed by government officials in violation of the provisions of Republic Act No. 7438.

- Videotapes and cameras were allegedly confiscated in violation of the right against un-

reasonable searches and seizures.

- The officers committed grave abuse of authority and grave misconduct, "especially when they tied the journalists' hands in full public view."

- The NPC formally asks the [CHR] to conduct a thorough, exhaustive, and impartial investigation into the incidents for the purpose of determining culpability for the aforementioned human rights violations and to bring to justice those found liable," said the complaint.

Rules of engagement

The commissioners have ordered the NPC to submit individual affidavits of the media persons concerned so that they could issue subpoenas to Puno, Razon and Barrios.

Commissioner Dominador Calamba III said the CHR would ask the officials to bring to the Dec. 6 hearing after-operations report and identify the commanding officer and all other police members involved in the arrests.

"There might also be a chance that we require a lineup of these policemen for them to be identified by the media," he said.

The commission is expected to come up with its findings and recommendations 10 days following the public hearing.

Cerge Remonde, chief of the Presidential Management Staff, yesterday said Malacaflang was inviting media organizations for a dialogue to draw up "mutually accepted rules of engagement" in reporting on crisis situations.

He said the government panel would be led by Vice President Noli de Castro and would include Armed Forces Chief of Staff Gen. Hermogenes Esperon Jr., Razon and officials of the National Telecommunications Commission, which issues radio and TV licenses.

Remonde said that the Kapisanan ng Brodkaster ng Pilipinas was helping arrange the dialogue at the Dusit Hotel Nikko in Makati City.

Step forward

Remonde said that President Macapagal-Arroyo had expressed regret at the arrests of the journalists and that the dialogue would be a "step forward."

"The media cannot also be used as a shield and also a platform of sedition which is against our Penal code," he said.

Puno yesterday sought to downplay the media treatment during Thursday's uprising. He said the arrests were a result of misunderstanding by police and media of their respective roles during a police operation.

"We should bridge this misunderstanding rather than go after one another because we are missing the point in the whole exercise," he said in a phone patch interview with reporters.

"Let's lower the temperature and let's go after those that deserved to be pursued, namely, the perpetrators of the coup and those who have escaped," Puno said.

"Maybe the CHR would be a good venue for us to air the responsibilities of both sectors," he said.

From page A1</

SEC charges PIPC execs with fraud

By Elizabeth Sanchez-Lacson

THE SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE Commission (SEC) said yesterday it had found fraud, "chicanery" and other violations of securities laws committed by trading firm PIPC Corp. and its officers and agents.

Philippine-registered PIPC Corp. and its parent firm Performance Investment Products Corp. (PIPC) British Virgin Islands—whose Singaporean owner reportedly vanished with at least \$250 million in investors' cash—were also charged in August by the National Bureau of Investigation with syndicated fraud along with 32 officers, incorporators and employees.

In its complaint filed with the Department of Justice yesterday, the SEC found that PIPC Corp., its officers and agents were liable for violation of provisions of the Securities Regulation Code (SRC) under Section 8 or the illegal sale of unregistered securities; under Section 28 for failing to register brokers and agents to solicit investments, and under Section 26 for fraudulent transactions.

Named respondents were Singaporean national and PIPC Corp. chair Michael H.K. Liew, directors Cristina Gonzalez-Tuason and Cristina Jurado, and agents Eugene Co, Maria Pamela Morris, Michael Melchor Nubla, Luis Aragon, Mayenne Carmona, Anthony



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Kierulf, Renato Sarmiento Jr., Barbara Garcia, Jonathan Ocampo, Deborah Yabut, Victor Jose Vergel de Dios, David Chua-Unsu, Stanley Chua-Unsu, Nicole Ortega, Oudine Santos, Mia Legarda, Nicoline Amoranto Mendoza, Christine Yu and Herly Hesultas.

Also named respondents with no particular designation were Jose Tengo and Yeye San Pedro Choa.

The SEC told the DOJ the case stemmed from the "act of fraud and chicanery masterfully orchestrated and executed by the officers and agents of PIPC Corp. against their unsuspecting investors."

It said the deception was founded on

the fact that neither PIPC Corp. nor its officers, employees and agents were registered brokers or dealers, making their transactions of offering and selling securities to the public "a blatant violation of the provisions of the SRC."

The SEC said the illegal offer or sale of securities in the form of a "Portfolio Management Partnership Agreement" to the public was perpetrated for nine years and would have continued were it not for the alleged deliberate withdrawal of all the corporation's funds by Liew.

The SEC said the fraud was masked by a supposed offshore foreign currency trading scheme promising that one's investment would be guaranteed or fully protected with prospects for profits at an annual rate of 12 to 18 percent.

Cited in the complaint to the DOJ were 32 complaint-affidavits filed with the SEC, with total investments amounting to roughly \$3.8 million (based on INQUIRER computations).

SEC documents showed that while PIPC Corp. was registered with the commission, the solicitation and sale of securities was contrary to the purpose for which it was established, which was to act only as a financial research facility.

The SEC asked the DOJ to file cases in court against the respondents for the violations cited.

SEC violations are punishable by a fine of between P50,000 and P5 million or imprisonment of not less than 7 years and not more than 21 years.

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THE PHILIPPINE STAR

Sumilao farmers reach Metro

FIFTY-FIVE FARMERS OF THE HIGAONON tribe, walking all the way from Sumilao, Bukidnon, entered Metro Manila yesterday on the last leg of a 1,700-km march-to-Malacañang to protest the cancellation of their land reform grants.

Marking the 54th day of their "Walk for Sumilao Land, Walk for Justice" with a simple lunch of rice and chicken in Barangay Talon Uno, Las Piñas City, the Sumilao farmers said they will march to the Senate today, then proceed to the Department of Agrarian Reform before ending their March on Dec. 7 in front of Malacañang Palace.

Agrarian reform Secretary Nasser Pangandaman, expecting the farmers to camp outside his department in the next few days, announced he would fly to Bukidnon today to personally inspect the 144-hectare estate which was given to the farmers in 1996 but later returned to its original owners, the Norberto Quisumbing Sr. Management Development Corp.

The Supreme Court upheld the rights of the Quisumbing Estate over the land in 1999 after government approved their application to convert the area into an agro-industrial park.

"We'll resolve the case as transparently as possible and we'll do it based on its merits," Pangandaman said in a press statement yesterday.

The Sumilao farmers said the Quisumbing family did not develop its promised agro-industrial estate, which reportedly would have included a "Development Academy of Mindanao." Instead, the owners sold part of the land to San Miguel Food Inc. (SMFI) in 2002.

Three years ago, the farmers asked the DAR to stop the conversion and give them back their agrarian reform grants.

The department did not act on their petition, saying it did not have jurisdiction over the case.

But as the Sumilao farmers began their march, drumming up sympathy and publicity in various towns and cities along the way, Malacañang remanded the dispute to DAR.

With a report from Julie M. Aurelio

In harm's way

PRESIDENT MACAPAGAL ARROYO, BEFORE LEAVING for Europe last Saturday, instructed her Cabinet members and top military and police officials not to "unnecessarily rile the media at this point in time." (Note the adverb "unnecessarily." Are there instances where the military and police can "necessarily" rile the media?) The officials can follow Ms Arroyo's instruction simply by letting media people do their work in peace, unimpeded by strict and constricting regulations.

EDITORIAL Journalists do not ask for—and do not need—special privileges in coverage; they just need a free, unrestricted environment in which they can effectively carry out their principal function of informing the public about what is happening in the country and the world.

Journalists have the duty to be in a place where a news event is developing. Certainly, whenever something violent is about to happen, reporters should be allowed to move to places where they will be protected from harm. But they should not be treated like children; they are mature enough to decide for themselves where they should go to get out of harm's way.

Maria Ressa, ABS-CBN news chief, is right: "No journalist is willing to die for any newsmaker." Yesterday, she explained that the ABS-CBN news team was at the Makati Regional Trial Court to cover the testimony of Brig. Gen. Daniel Lim but acted on a vague tip the previous night that Sen. Antonio Trillanes, a co-accused of Lim's in a rebellion case, would "make a move" on that day.

Ressa also said that the ABS-CBN news team was able to set up its equipment ahead of the other networks because it was familiar with the Manila Peninsula floor plan because of previous show biz coverage. Also, it had prior knowledge that the Trillanes group would go there. Ressa issued the statements by way of explaining why the ABS-CBN news team was way ahead of other news organizations in preparing for the coverage of what turned out to be the Trillanes-Lim walkout, march and hotel occupation.

Ressa also rightly justified the continuing presence of the ABS-CBN news team during the Peninsula siege. The media should be an eyewitness in a "war zone," or any place where there is public conflict, to check on "the excessive use of force." She recalled that the last time there was a major police operation was the Bicutan jail siege, where no journalist was present to witness and cover the assault. That assault ended with 22 detainees and one policeman dead.

What really happened in the Bicutan siege? Did the police use excessive force? Were most of the slain detainees executed extrajudicially? Why the very big disparity between the number of detainees and policemen killed? Nobody knows because the media were not there, on the spot, to cover the news event as it developed.

In the Peninsula standoff, there would have been little or no need to put restrictions on the positions and the movements of the media people at the hotel had the police not resorted to overkill. It was like using a cannon to SWAT down a fly: hundreds of troops and several armored personnel carriers moving against some 30 protesters, smashing down a door of the hotel and shooting up the place with high-caliber weapons. No wonder Trillanes and company decided to surrender; they did not want the blood of many people on their hands, even if the ones responsible for the shoot-up would be a battalion of trigger-happy policemen.

It is reported that the next step is for the police and the media to meet and draw up so-called "rules of engagement" (a Freudian slip on the part of the police, if you ask us, because it implies that the media and the police are in conflict). These are rules that would govern coverage by the media of standoffs, sieges, assaults and similar situations of conflict and possible violence. But there is actually no need for the police to lay down such rules. There is only one rule here, and it is the rule of self-preservation. If reporters believe they will die if they stay in a place where there is a conflict situation, they will get the hell out of it as fast as they can. To repeat Ressa's statement: "No journalist is willing to die for any newsmaker."

The media organizations should make their own rules, and individual media persons should make their own decisions, on whether to stay in a potentially dangerous or even fatal place.

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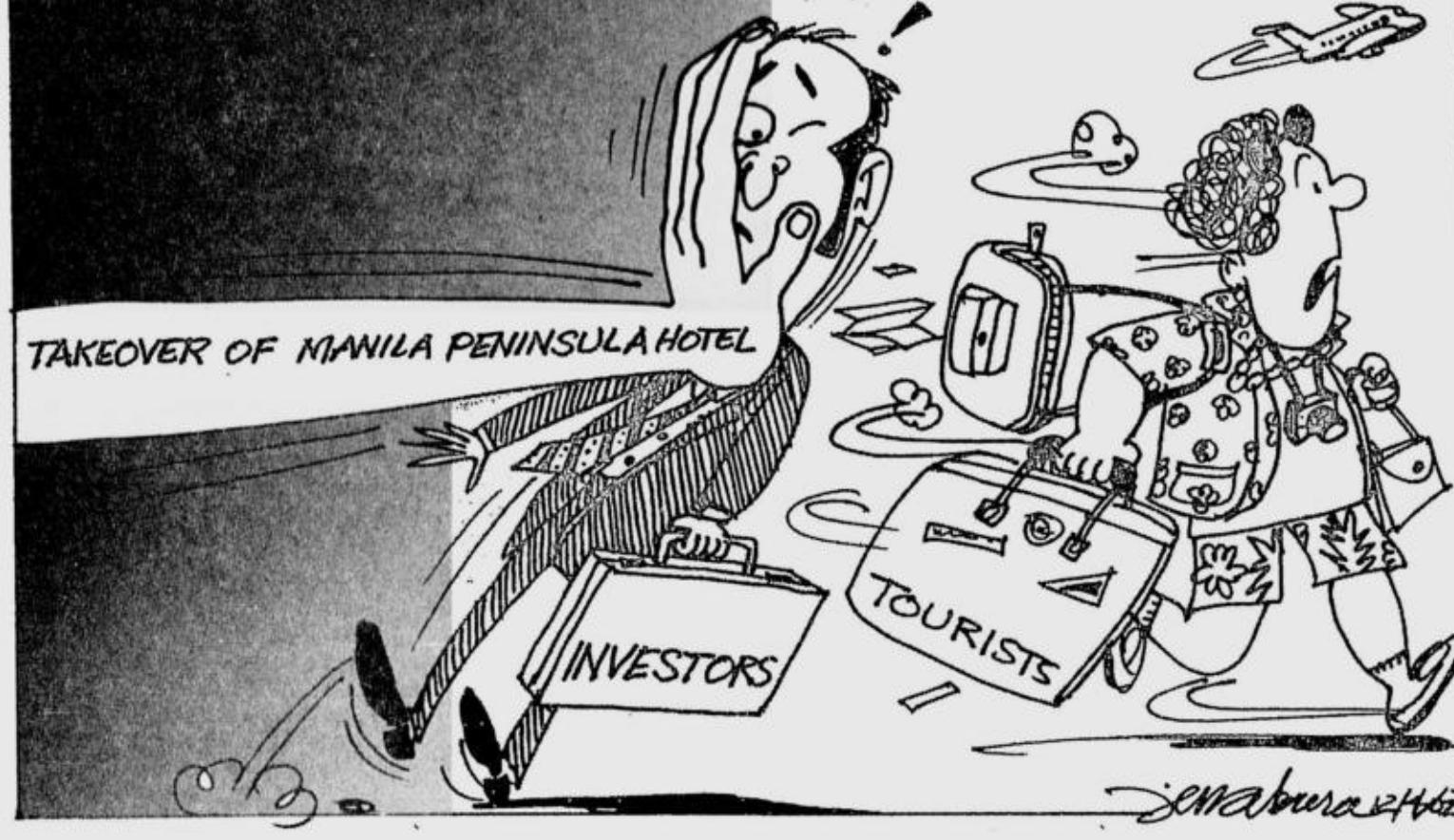
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Lowered voices

VIEWPOINT



Juan L. Mercado

WE SHOULD PROBABLY LOWER OUR VOICES. That seems the more sensible thing to do in today's heated exchanges over handcuffing of journalists, during the siege of rebels holed up in a Makati hotel.

Police arrested 103, after a tear-gas attack in Peninsula Hotel. Among them were 51 journalists. They were covering Sen. Antonio Trillanes, Brig. Gen. Danilo Lim and other rebels when assault teams barged in. Some were handcuffed. All were bused to a military camp where credentials were checked. They were released that evening.

Luxury hotels draw our rebels, to use a Rizal image, like moths to a candle. The Marcos "nominee," Arturo Tolentino, took over the Manila Hotel in a coup attempt against President Corazon Aquino. Trillanes' hotel of choice, for his first failed rebellion in 2003, was Oakwood. This time around, Trillanes pledged to pay for the Pen damage. But he was careful not to send for the bill.

"The mutineers ... were making a point, albeit dramatically, and of course only when they'd made sure there was an army of TV cameras," wrote BBC's Jonathan Head. "In a country so in love with the cult of celebrity, that kind of showmanship seems somehow quite natural. And then everything is more or less back to normal. It could only happen in the Philippines."

Journalists dashed for the Pen after Trillanes and supporters, stormed out of court, and holed up there. They opted to stay on, despite pleas from government forces to leave. And for seven hours, live coverage continued from journalists embedded within the hotel—until an armored personnel carrier smashed the hotel door.

"We were just doing our job. This was our right," said Charrie Villa of ABS-CBN. I'm sure they were. The police were doing their job too. It was their right to secure "an area where a crisis was unfolding," Undersecretary Marius Corpus insisted. No question about that either.

But things get hairy when two rights collide, amid tear gas, gun shots, taut nerves and players from all sides elbowing for media advantage.

Given the adrenaline surge, Peninsula triggered furious criticisms. "One can quibble about words," Fr. Joaquin Bernas wrote. But this "invitation for processing ... was an arrest." That's a lucid reading of the law.

But are there other perspectives. I winced to see former Vice President Teofisto Guingona

manacled. We shared the same detention compound after our arrest during martial law. A visiting son, who is a Northwest Airlines pilot, had another: "If security agents stormed my plane, on an anti-hijack operation, they'd handcuff everybody on the first go. That guarantees we'll be alive to sift out the innocent from the guilty."

Threats of law suits and countersuits followed. "If some networks file charges against us, we might look into obstruction of justice," said PNP Director General Avelino Razon Jr. Call the bluff, an INQUIRER editorial snapped. If media blinks, "Gestapos in the PNP and in Malacañang will ... crush everyone's political rights and civil liberties."

Protracted court brawls are not likely to give media and government the guidelines they needed yesterday. There's no quarrel on principles, like ensuring access to news sources or bars against broadcasting troop deployment. Cops may not masquerade as reporters. Nor may journalists hock credentials, etc.

The devil is in the details. What responsibilities do reporters assume when they stray in areas of operation? How do we weed out *ha-shaos*? And so on. "Common sense and relatively clean fingernails," to borrow John Mortimer's phrase, can do the job.

But manacles "sidelined the real issue," groused National Security Adviser Norberto Gonzales. This was the potential for the Trillanes caper "to change the course of history." Well, yes and no.

Yes, ham-handling shifted focus of the coverage. No, the basic issue is different: Did this amateurish revolt deepen further the President's being hostage to the military?

"She owes her political survival to the military," an AFP dispatch quotes a diplomat. "She knows it. And the military knows it. There is little she can do."

Reporting how this dilemma plays out will require of us in media continued reporting of verification rather than of assertion.

E-mail: juanolmercado@gmail.com

Batty things

THERE'S THE RUB



Conrado de Quiros

I DON'T KNOW WHY, BUT EVERY TIME MIRIAM Defensor-Santiago proposes something seriously, I feel amused. Maybe because she takes herself seriously when the world doesn't. Her latest proposal is for the Senate to oust Antonio Trillanes. She has called on the senators to abandon political partisanship and unite to punish a transgressor.

She seems to have forgotten that not too long ago she—along with Juan Ponce Enrile and several other erstwhile pro-Erap political figures—goaded a throng that gathered at the Edsa Shrine to *sugod* Malacañang. Later, she even dared government to arrest her, putting a gun on top of her desk in front of TV cameras to suggest a "High Noon" scenario if the cops were to do it. To this day, I wonder why the cops did not—and maybe help to produce a different ending to the movie.

Santiago never got to be punished for it. She lost neither office nor personal liberty. All she lost was her love for Erap, to be replaced by a love for the very person she was goading the hapless horde (some were killed in the subsequent riot) to lay siege to.

Not as amusing and far more serious are the criticisms in the blogs about why Trillanes and Lin should take the mutinous path again when Trillanes, in particular, agreed to be bound by constitutional/legal processes when he ran for senator, and why anyone would want to oust a leader whose term is near to expiring, such as two-and-a-half years can be construed as near.

In the first case, well, the question precisely is whether there are still constitutional/legal processes left in the country with which to right wrongs or redress grievances. The spectacle today suggests that it's not merely that, as in Marcos' time, the people who run the country are free to ignore constitutional and legal process, if indeed they know such things exist. It's also that, as in Marcos' time, the constitutional or legal processes, or their interpretation and implementation, lie in the hands of the unconstitutional and lawless.

Being abroad offers the advantage of seeing this in a clearer light. Britain is currently rocked

from spending taxpayers' money to visit the Queen. In their case, given a case that involves the ethics of public officials, elected officials have moved to abandon partisanship and call for the wrongdoers to be punished. In our case, well, you wonder how Santiago got to package herself as a brilliant constitutionalist given her concept of what things senators ought not to be partisan about. In their case, when MPs say let the law take its course, the public is reasonably sure the law will live up to its reputation as having a long arm. In our case, when the congressmen say let the law take its course, you see law take the face of Raul Gonzalez, Norberto Gonzales and Ronaldo Puno and know that Iraq War amputees have longer reaches.

It's all very well for people to not take extraconstitutional or extralegal ways to right wrongs and redress grievances. But what if the constitutional/legal processes are blocked at every turn? What if the constitutional/legal processes have all but disappeared?

The second objection, which is why try to oust a President whose departure isn't very far off, presumes she is going to depart then. That is a monumental presumption, which isn't borne out by the resoluteness with which constitutional and legal processes are currently being savaged. Why should a President whose term never began be unduly bothered by when it would end?

The foreign news that keeps flashing in London over the last few days is about Pervez Musharraf enjoying a fresh lease on life by declaring martial law, legitimizing his much-questioned victory in recent polls, and emerging a civilian leader in lieu of a military one from the ashes. How long he will continue to rule is anybody's guess.

When Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo remains head of the Philippine government after May 2010, either as prime minister or as president courtesy of an amended Constitution, Filipinos will have every chance to look regretfully back at Nov. 29 2007. And wonder why, when they had a chance to change their stars, they thought it was the silliest thing to do.

Too little emphasis on media responsibility

POLITICAL TIDBITS

Belinda Olivares-Cunanan



REP TEDDY CASINO YESTERDAY DECRIED THAT the lack of accountability of public officials, led by President Macapagal-Arroyo, has led the rebel soldiers to resort to extreme measures. This argument, however, seems to be a poor excuse for grabbing power, as documents recovered from Sen. Antonio Trillanes and Brig. Gen. Danilo Lim at the Manila Peninsula now indicate that they wanted to lead the junta they would establish. Thus, their plan to shunt aside the politicians is now deemed a major reason support failed to materialize for them. But even granting that the rebels' gripes are valid, the Filipino people seem to have mixed political power flowing from the barrel of the gun. Had the country made the shift to the parliamentary system two years ago, the Pen fiasco need not have taken place, as undesirable leaders can be changed by a vote of no confidence in parliament. Those who fought Cha-cha should blame themselves for what's now happening.

Bishop Ramon Arguelles of Lipa made the startling revelation in the Manila Standard that there were efforts to recruit him recently to join the rebellion to oust GMA, but that he didn't agree and refused to be used by power-grabbers. Arguelles reinforced the police theory that the Trillanes plot was far wider than it appeared to be, and was well-funded. There are reports that informal settlers in Tondo were paid P200 each to join the Pen's caper, but they were stopped by government checkpoints. Makati Mayor Jejomar Binay has admitted that the wig-wearing person standing behind Trillanes in film clips works at City Hall, and there are also reports that guns were smuggled into toilets there before the rebels walked out. Police are also asking how the rebels were able to walk the two kilometers to the Pen without being stopped by Makati policemen. Binay was quoted as saying he's investigating such reports, but perhaps the first thing he ought to do is explain why he was dressed in military fatigues last Thursday morning and only changed into civvies after lunch.

The damage of Trillanes' capricious caper is inest-

timable. The Manila Pen had just been renovated before the rebels stormed in, and damage is estimated at P20 million. Among the worst was the destruction of its very expensive glass front and side doors. There was a lot of lost business in Makati. Sadly, too, many events were going on in Metro Manila last Thursday, and one of them involved some 200 parliamentarians from around 60 countries attending a big HIV/AIDS conference at the Manila Hotel.

I attended the luncheon hosted by Speaker Jose de Venecia that noon and later I saw Inter-Parliamentary Union Secretary General Andrew Johnson, a Swede, seek him out, plainly worried about the safety of delegates. JDV brought him up to the penthouse for some calming talk, stressing his by now famous observation that "there's cause for concern, but not for alarm," and that the rebellion would soon be crushed by government troops. Earlier talk among diplomats revealed that the British Foreign Secretary called up UK Ambassador Peter Beckingham to inquire about the situation, perhaps in anticipation of the President's visit to London this Thursday. Probably nothing could be worse for the country than the image that went around the world, courtesy of CNN, of an armored personnel carrier ramming the Pen's doors. All these, thanks to the putschists' immaturity.

The issue of media's "processing" by the police is raising a hue and cry from various media organizations here and abroad. The police explained that the media people were herded to Bicutan because of reports that some rebels pretended to be media members. Admittedly the police seemed a bit rattled that

afternoon, when the right thing perhaps was to conduct the verification right in the hotel, so there would have been no need for the plastic handcuffs and the TV superstars could have been let go right away. All that, however, is hindsight, but the media remain aggrieved and plan to file charges against the police.

The unfortunate encounter drew from PMS chief Cerge Remonde, himself a mediaman, the observation that a dialogue between the protagonists is badly needed. The police also wants guidelines about handling media.

But all the complaints about curtailment of press freedom sound hollow to many people, including this columnist. For didn't we see such an unbridled press conference by Trillanes et al. under full media coverage? Many citizens found it disconcerting, in fact, that the police didn't do anything as the rebels talked their heads off, although it was good they didn't, for now there's hordes of disillusioned voters of Trillanes. It must also be stressed that the police patiently called the desks of all newspaper and TV-radio newsroom and pleaded with them to get their reporters out of the Pen by 3 p.m., as counter-operations were to begin. But the media just ignored that plea and for the next three hours, they stuck by the rebels, with some plainly heard over TV saying, "We'll protect you." Sadly, many of our media practitioners seem too obsessed with their freedom, "to do our job" but there's too little emphasis on media's responsibility. One such responsibility involves cooperation with police to protect public interest against enemies of the state.

Don't fail to watch tonight at 7:30 p.m. at the PICC the gala Christmas concert, "Adeste Fideles 2007," organized by realtor Eddie Yap for the Management Association of the Philippines. It will feature the country's leading tenors and sopranos, the Philippine Madrigal Singers, Vina Morales, George Yang and the Metro Manila Community Orchestra under Josefino "Chino" Toledo. Among those invited to watch for free are the patients of V. Luna Medical Center, Alay sa Kawa Foundation's widows and orphans and students of the Erda Technical-Vocational High School.

woman to come back or be contacted for her results, which in many settings can be inconvenient and impractical.

Other tests have since been developed, including a low-cost and simple test for the presence of HPV DNA which indicates an infection, and which is now being pilot-tested in some countries. There is also a test designed for "low resource settings," the VIA or visual inspection with acetic acid wash, in which trained health personnel (including midwives and even community health workers) can check for the presence of lesions using only the naked eye by "washing" the cervix area with acetic acid or household vinegar. Given the lack of resources and the very low number of women gaining access to traditional screening methods, the DOH has adopted the VIA as the preferred screening method in the country.

THE CECAP has also partnered with JHPICO, a global initiative on community health, in the establishment of the "single-visit approach," which tests women, especially in remote, underserved areas in the country, using the VIA then treating visible lesions through cryotherapy. The goal, said JHPICO president Leslie Mancuso, is to "get the results (to the women) and get them treated if needed, preferably in one visit."

So far, said Mancuso, they have trained "thousands" of doctors, nurses and midwives around the country in the single-visit approach and screened some 3,000 women, 40 of whom were found to have pre-cancerous lesions and were treated.

The ultimate goal, of course, is to prevent HPV infection, which can be addressed by the HPV vaccine, two versions of which are being marketed by drug multinationals. But given the high cost of the vaccines, hope for making a dent in the number of cervical cancer deaths lies in a combination of public awareness; public demand for (and the availability of) screening and treatment; as well as for the vaccines.

With "Bravehearts" engaged in the struggle against the disease, we might see fewer women sharing the fate that befell Jane.

THIS IS HOW DR. JANE ADEVOSO, 27, DESCRIBES herself: "the eldest in the family, the only girl, the first niece, the first grandchild."

Throughout her life, she says, she was treated "like a princess" by her parents and the other adults in her family, and she and her loved ones had good reason to believe that nothing bad or evil would ever happen to her. Then last year, Jane found herself pregnant, and during her first check-up she underwent a routine pap smear, a screening procedure that tests for cervical cancer. When the doctor called her about the results, Jane says she was "surprised and afraid," not knowing how to tell her parents about the diagnosis.

At age 26, Jane found herself "pregnant and a cancer patient," and in the early days after the diagnosis "lived in denial that I had the disease." Referred to Dr. Cecilia Llave, head of the UP-PGH Cancer Institute and an OB-gyn oncologist, Jane also faced a difficult choice: terminate her pregnancy so she could undergo immediate treatment, or continue with her pregnancy and risk the further progression of the cancer. "I chose to continue my pregnancy," recounts Jane, "and in October 2006, I gave birth to my son Gabriel. Soon after, I underwent a hysterectomy (removal of the uterus)."

And yet, despite the crisis that "tested my spirit and faith," Jane offers a message of hope to all women at risk of developing cervical cancer. "Cancer can be treated, especially with early diagnosis and treatment, and there can be life after a diagnosis."

Because of what she had undergone and has since learned about cervical cancer, Doktora Jane also considers herself a "Braveheart," the name of a multi-sectoral coalition launched last week to raise public awareness about cervical cancer, including its prevention.

"BRAVEHEARTS" is led by the Cervical Cancer Prevention Network (Cecap) and the Cancer Institute Foundation (CIF), mainly to alert women to the causes of cervical cancer and the many ways to prevent it. Dr. Llave, who is also program director of Cecap, said that over 20 years, the incidence and mortality rate for cervical cancer

NOT CONTENT WITH THE DAMAGE ANTONIO Trillanes et al. caused last Thursday, Malacañang issued orders to detain some (but, crucially, not all) of the journalists who covered the caper. The resulting controversy was like ramming a tank into the country's various newsrooms; it invited public outrage and international condemnation, at the exact moment the administration found itself in a position to claim an unusual, because unalloyed, victory.

But the Arroyo administration over-reacted in cuffing journalists and imposing a curfew—forcing the President, on the eve of her departure for Europe, to remind her alter egos "not [to] unnecessarily rile the media at this point in time."

To be sure, there is a logic to the paranoia. The administration is testing the limits of the people's capacity for resistance. It is essential that we push back.

I was guest speaker at the Rotary Club of Manila on the day Trillanes decided to play (ineptly) for all the marbles. Naturally, the possibility of popular support for Trillanes and company was a topic of discussion.

As it happens, I had decided to speak on "the limits of outrage," in an attempt to read current public opinion on corruption. I wanted to know the answer to a question I thought was all too often assumed in political scenario-building: Will public disgust over corruption unseat President Macapagal-Arroyo? In other words: Will outrage lead to ouster?

I have been tracking what I then called the "outrage gap" since the "Hello, Garc!" scandal exploded. My first post in my Newsstand blog, written on July 4, 2005, raises a question about the relationship between public outrage as measured by surveys, and protests in the streets.

At the Rotary Club of Manila forum, I studied three surveys. It was important, of course, to start right, with something that approaches Cartesian certitude. I started with the hypothesis that the public today shares the sense that "cor-

ruption is at its worst." I began with anecdotal evidence: the sense that, especially since the disclosure of the distribution of "cash gifts" in Malacañang, public forums and private conversations have been shaped by growing disgust over all-pervading corruption.

And then I looked to the surveys for confirmation. The PERC 2007 survey (admittedly requiring a leap back in time) shows the Philippines faring the worst among 13 economies. This is the survey (again, admittedly of a very select public: expatriates doing business in Asia) that, taken somewhat out of context, gave the opposition a rallying cry in the last election. But why was it such an effective rallying point? Because it captured so-called conventional wisdom. The June 2007 SWS survey also showed that, on the issue of graft and corruption, an almost-majority of voting-age Filipinos said they were dissatisfied with the Arroyo administration's performance. Only a bare third said they were satisfied.

These numbers, if we equate public dissatisfaction with public outrage, will give pause to any politician with a weak stomach or weaker appetite. But as it turns out, the numbers are not as damning over the longer term. The same SWS survey shows that the net satisfaction rating on the administration's handling of graft and corruption (-18 in June 2007) was actually worse in September 2006 (-30). In other words, there has been a cooling in public opinion (or at least the results allow us to say that).

In fact, the cooling pattern is some 20 years old. SWS reports that public opinion on government's handling of graft and corruption traditionally be-

gins at a (relatively) high level with every administration, and then declines over the administration's term.

That brings us to the present. In its October 2007 survey, Pulse Asia found that a majority of voting-age Filipinos identified various graft and corruption issues as reason enough for a president to resign. (I have a little problem with this part of the survey, but I think the main thrust is indisputable.) When asked what action they were willing to take to force the resignation of a president linked to graft and corruption, however, only a quarter said they were willing to take to the streets. About the same number said they were willing to do something beyond street protests.

There, as that little Shakes-scene taught us to say, is the rub. Outrage over corruption is not what brings people to the streets. It prepares the public, and it leads to defeat of the incumbent at the ballot box. But Edsa I was not so much about corruption as about election fraud; Edsa II was about the hijacking of the impeachment process.

Rotarian Nick Locsin summarized my point succinctly: We are not insensitive to corruption, but we are used to it. The lesson for regime-changers: Corruption scandals do not prematurely bring down an administration, but proof of something else entirely—brazen fraud, gross impunity, lewd dancing in the halls of the Senate.

Allow me to remember a friend who died a most unexpected death last month. Emoy Gorongonja was a poet of wisdom, with a gift for locating the positive in any situation. He was also the most gifted, among all the people I know, at the art of romance; he knew the stagecraft of courtship, of wooing, intimately. Indeed, some of his "gimmicks" are legend to his students and mine, back when we were teaching in Xavier University. That these were as collaborative as plays, that they depended on other people for their style and wit, is a tribute to his talent for working with people, and imbuing them with, yes, the sense of possibility.

Email: jnery@inquirer.com.ph

Inside call centers

PERHAPS MANY PEOPLE HAVE ALREADY WRITTEN ABOUT the wonders and benefits of the call center industry: how it has been providing generous pay, perks and privileges to the twentysomethings, or how it has provided jobs to thousands of Filipinos all over the country.

These are the known facts. But what about the unknown bits and pieces that make up a call center?

Oftentimes,

things "unknown"

are interpreted to

mean scary or ugly

or even taboo. In the

call center industry,

however, it does not

need to have always

a negative connota-

tion. So I am writing

to share with every-

one some unknown

facts: anecdotes,

procedures and other crazy stories that make an entire in-

dustry. These are basically experiences someone inside the

industry encounters almost on a daily basis that may shock,

disturb or simply amuse.

Here then is a chronicle of my not-so-ordinary, five-year,

call center experience.

Fact No. 1: The call center is the new church of the gay re-

ligion. Work in a call center for just one day (or night, since

most call centers are on graveyard shift anyway) and you

will meet dozens of gorgeous, uh, men. They can be divided

into three groups: (1) the homophobic straights (these are

the guys who would pulverize over-aggressive gay men in

public restrooms), (2) the curious straights (their primary

preference are women but when enticed or seduced by gay

men, they give in), and (3) the certified gays, who can be sub-categorized into two groups—the peppermints, a.k.a.

"Pa-MHIN-Ta," (discreet, still-hiding-in-the-closet gay men,

and the flamboyants who either cross-dress or are just too

loud and proud of their homosexuality).

Fact No. 2: The call center industry is the breeding ground for "college bosses." Gone are the days when a typical boss was an old, fat, balding guy who ordered everyone around and asked anyone to fix him a cup of coffee. In the call center industry, you get to meet very young bosses whose ages range from 22 to 25 years. They are definitely not the classic "The Devil Wears Prada" bosses, instead they are your carefree, fresh-from-college bosses who love to party and drink Starbucks coffee as if it's water. Oftentimes, these bosses get to where they are not because of their superior skills and intelligence but because of their great "talent" to smother their own bosses with praises and complimentments and their ability to kiss butts.

Fact No. 3: The call center industry is slowly turning into a haven for the "plastics." The movie "Mean Girls" glorified the "plastics" as portrayed by Lindsay Lohan and Rachel McAdams. They are basically persons who do not show their true colors, and most of the time they engage in backbiting.

Working in a call center exposes you to the world of "plastics." Beware of those who treat you extraordinarily nice, those who appear too friendly, because they are often times the same persons who say the unkindest things about you behind your back. Once I took an elevator, with two colleagues whom I will just call Gorio and Tekla. We made small talk and I heard Tekla say, "Gosh, Gorio, you're so funny talaga..." and ended with a sweet, melodious laugh. Gorio laughed with her and got off the elevator. As soon as the poor guy was out of earshot, Tekla looked at me, made a face and said, "Gosh, Allyn, I hate that guy! He is so pa-bi-bo... taking out our boss for cocktails just to get promoted. He's so undeserving! Duh!"

I wanted to ask Tekla, "Wasn't it just seconds ago when you were cracking jokes with Gorio? And now you're telling me you hate the guy?" Like, duh!

Fact No. 4: The call center industry is the modern-day Garden of Eden. Remember it was in that garden where Adam and Eve met and fell in love, and now the call center is a paradise for lovers. It is where single men and women meet, work together and fall in love. It is also where married men and married women meet, work together, fall in love and leave their wives or husbands. Morality and social obligations are often overlooked, if not, deliberately forgotten as lust triumphs completely.

Fact No. 5: The call center industry is a ticket for foreign travels. Most call center companies nowadays include training abroad as part of the job offer to entice the best applicants. True enough, there are call centers that send their employees to places like United States and United Kingdom on all-expense paid trips. There are so many stories about young men and women who had the wonderful opportunity of traveling overseas, thanks to generous companies.

These are just some of the many things that very few people know about the call center industry. In writing about them, my intention is not to expose or mock people working in the industry or expose some ugly, hidden truths, policies or procedures. I am merely writing about the experiences I had while working in a call center. After working in the industry for five years, I think I can say I know its ins and outs. Indeed the industry is worth venturing into, as it promises an unbelievable and magical

Palace disregarded civilian lives

THE WAY MALACAÑANG HANDLED THE "Manila Peninsula Hotel standoff" last Nov. 29 showed us that the present administration has no regard for the safety of civilians and is not inclined to listen to the people's call for sobriety. The volleys of gunfire unleashed toward the hotel, the tear gas attack and the use of an armored personnel carrier (APC) to force entry into the hotel were incontrovertible evidence that the combined special forces of the police and military were given orders to launch an all-out assault, even at the risk of losing civilian lives, including those of Bishop Julio Labayan, former Vice Pres. Teofisto Guingona and members of the media.

We strongly condemn Malacañang for resorting to excessive force that could have cost the lives of so many people.

We also join media groups in condemning the unjustified arrest of media persons. The arrest of media workers who were in the scene just to do their duty constitutes a grave violation of press freedom and the people's right to know.

We admire the media people who courageously stood their ground to carry on with their job during those critical hours.

We deplore the Arroyo government for declaring a virtual martial law by imposing a curfew, putting up checkpoints and carrying out warrantless arrests such as the mass arrest of reporters and civilians last Nov. 29. As we have repeatedly seen in the past, it will not only be Sen. Antonio Trillanes and his supporters who will be the targets of heightened surveillance, harassment, threats and arrests. In the name of "national security," people's organizations, and even media groups, that are critical of the administration will also be subjected to this oppressive and repressive campaign.



PROOF of callousness? An APC in the hotel lobby

Base sin tax on current retail prices

IN RECENT WEEKS, THE GOVERNMENT'S revenue collection performance has become a hot topic. Much has been said about the falling collection on "sin" taxes, or the excise taxes levied on alcohol and tobacco products. Unfortunately, the excise tax classification of our cigarette brand Pall Mall has been conveniently but erroneously dragged into the issue.

Please allow us, therefore, to clarify a number of relevant points.

First, Pall Mall's classification as a mid-price brand subject to a rate of P6.74 per pack will not lead to a reduction in the Bureau of Internal Revenue's excise tax collections. Pall Mall has always been paying this rate since the time of its market introduction in 2004. The Department of Finance decision on July 24, 2007 merely confirmed it as Pall Mall's proper and final tax classification.

Second, if Pall Mall is to be taxed at a rate higher than P6.74 per pack, it would be uncompetitive as a mid-price brand, since its competitor brands like Winston and Hope are also paying the rate of P6.74. Pall Mall would eventually be forced out of the market and, instead of having one other brand such as Pall Mall contributing to collections, the BIR would lose a potential revenue source.

—AMIE DURAL, secretary general, Promotion of Church People's Response (PCPR), 3/F NCCP Compound, 879 EDSA, Quezon City 1101

Filipino people will have to live with Ms Arroyo as president until 2010 because we have "no better options." This is a gross insult to the integrity of Filipino leaders who can rightfully replace the morally bankrupt and illegitimate president. The people who have had enough of corruption, poverty and injustice will continue to demand change and better options other than this rotten government.

Former President Ramos claimed that the

Re parasite infection: Please don't blame the victims

AS I WAS READING THE NEWS item headlined "70 dead in parasite infection; entire Zambo village afflicted" (INQUIRER, 11/28/07), I told myself that the epidemic was but one of the many testaments to the current state of health in our country. While some Filipinos happily go about their daily lives, eating three or more meals a day, spending P300-P400 per meal in fancy restaurants, there are those, in many places such as this village in Siayan, Zamboanga, who barely have anything to eat and who are pushed to eat things they know are not fit for human consumption.

This is no longer a surprise to me. As a medical graduate from

the Philippine General Hospital, I am aware that this is what is happening throughout the country. We don't have to look far. We see this in Metro Manila.

But what came as a shock to me were the last six paragraphs of the report. That the people who died should be blamed for their fate was by itself already abhorrent; even more loathsome was to hear the blame coming from the Zamboanga del Norte health chief.

I don't know whether her words were taken out of context. I would not call her an elitist who does not have a heart for her constituents. But what she reportedly said really

bothered me.

Yes, the people of this village may not know how to "defecate." Yes, the people of this village may "(not) know how to follow prescriptions" or even simple instructions.

But aren't these the reasons why health authorities are deployed in different parts of the country? I'm sure that Dr. Carmencita Icao meant well for her people. I just hope that, rather than criticizing the victims and blaming them for their condition, she would find the solution to this problem very soon.

—DR. JT TIBUNG, 04-19 Tanjong Ria Condominium, Tanjong Rhu Road, Singapore

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No closure on Pelaez slay attempt

KUDOS TO FORMER SGT. PABLO Martinez for admitting and repenting his involvement in the assassination of Ninoy Aquino. I admire him for coming clean and revealing what he knows of the case and Ninoy's killing.

But I am deeply disappointed with the reaction of Sen. Noynoy Aquino to Martinez's confession implicating Eduardo "Danding" Cojuangco as the mastermind. Senator Aquino dismissed the allegation as "absurd." (INQUIRER, 11/24/07) Is it really? What would be Martinez's motive for making a false

confession? Isn't this allegation worth examining more closely?

Our family has not been as fortunate as Sen. Aquino's in terms of getting our father's case solved. Since the attempt on the life of our father, Emmanuel Pelaez, in July 1982, no solid leads have turned up. In our case, however, the blessing was that our father survived the five bullets that pierced his body. He lived up to July 2003. No one has yet come out to put closure to our case.

—EDUARDO F. PELAEZ,
Cagayan de Oro City

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JPE, Ping tangle over helicopters

From page A1

island-hop in style and comfort.

Sen. Panfilo Lacson questioned the "frivolous" purchase of the two helicopters which he said accounted for nearly 15 percent of the Philippine Air Force's P8.2-billion budget for 2008.

"It's worse than Erap's kitchen or Erap's yacht," Lacson said, referring to the lavish renovation of the Malacañang kitchen and the presidential boat during the Estrada administration.

The helicopter purchase surfaced during deliberations on the 2008 budget in the Senate.

"At a time when projected gross borrowings would reach P346 billion in 2008 and with a shortfall of P40 billion in tax collections as of September, wouldn't it be unconscionable to buy two helicopters costing P634 million each?" Lacson queried Sen. Juan Ponce Enrile, chair of the Senate committee on finance, who was tasked to defend the 2008 budget in behalf of the Arroyo administration.

"When it concerns the safety of the Chief Executive, I'm not ready to say it's unconscionable," replied Enrile.

"Couldn't the President share one helicopter with the First Gentleman?" asked Lacson, to which Enrile replied: "One would be overused."

Lacson could not believe how Ms Arroyo could acquire two brand new helicopters while the Air Force has to make do with hand-me-downs from Washington.

In June, the PAF got 10 used Vietnam War-era I-1H choppers or Hueys for the government's counterinsurgency operations, part of the military hardware promised by US President George W. Bush during his Manila visit in 2003.

The PAF has 40 helicopters, most of which are second-hand and were donated by the United States.

37 lawmakers join GMA party; who's paying for their trip?

From page A1

The President and her husband, Jose Miguel Arroyo, were seated in business class, along with their children, Juan Miguel "Mikey" Arroyo, Diosdado "Dato" Arroyo and Evangeline Lourdes "Luli" Arroyo. The first couple's grandchildren were also on the flight.

Other officials who enjoyed business class comfort with the first family were Finance Secretary Peter Favila, Agriculture Secretary Arthur Yap, Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye and Senators Edgardo Angara, Miriam Santiago and Juan Miguel Zubiri.

Also in the VIP cabin were controversial women close to the President, including Malacañang staff member Remedios Poblador and Rep. Amelita Villarosa, both tagged in the recent bribery scandal at the Palace.

Other lawmakers and businessmen in the entourage were seated in economy.

34 lawmakers

"I'm shocked," Bayan Muna Rep. Teodoro Casilio said in the plenary session upon receiving the three-page Malacañang protocol list, copies of which were distributed to reporters. "I can't imagine what their role is in the presidential trip."

A separate two-page document from the Office of Presidential Protocol also listed 34 members of the House of Representatives as having been "cleared for inclusion in the delegation of the President."

Five more lawmakers were included in a separate list provided in a text message by someone identified with De Venecia.

With funding for the Europe trip under scrutiny, the Speaker claimed that the House leadership spent not a single centavo for the mammoth delegation.

Cheaper Medicines Bill

"There was no appropriation from the House regarding their plane fare, hotel bills and per diem (allowance)," he told

List of lawmakers in the President's trip to Madrid, Spain

1. SIMEON DATUMANONG, MAGUINDANAO
2. Ma. Amelita Villarosa, Occidental Mindoro
3. Reynina Nicolas, Bulacan
4. Ma. Milagros Magsaysay, Zambales
5. Mary Ann Susano, Quezon City
6. Victoria Reyes and spouse, Batangas
7. Rizalina Seachon-Lanete and son, Masbate
8. Herminia Ramiro, Misamis Occidental
9. Antonio Alvarez and spouse, Palawan
10. Trinidad Apostol, Leyte
11. Ma. Rachel Arenas, Pangasinan
12. Abraham Kahlil Mitra, Palawan
13. Rodolfo Antonino and spouse, Nueva Ecija
14. Antonio Cerilles, Zamboanga del Sur
15. Reynaldo Uy, Western Samar
16. Roger Mercado, Southern Leyte
17. Albert Garcia, Bataan
18. Monica Puentevela, Bacolod City
19. Nanette Castelo-Daza and companion, Quezon City
20. Arnulfo Go, Sultan Kudarat
21. Datu Pax Mangudadatu, Sultan Kudarat
22. Monica Louise Prieto-Teodoro, Tarlac
23. Anna York-Bondoc, MD, Pampana
24. Aurelio Gonzales, Pampanga
25. Ferdinand Martin Romualdez, Leyte
26. Zenalda Angping and spouse, Manila
27. Danilo Suarez, Quezon
28. Rodolfo Albano III, Isabela
29. Mark Llandro Mendoza, Batangas
30. Del de Guzman, Marikina City
31. Carmen Cari, Leyte
32. Ann Tan, Western Samar
33. Carissa Coscolluela, Buhay
34. Maria Isabelle Climaco, Zamboanga
35. Sen. Edgardo Angara
36. Sen. Miriam Defensor-Santiago
37. Sen. Juan Miguel Zubiri

the INQUIRER in a phone interview.

De Venecia declined to comment on the timing and propriety of the lawmakers' trip, considering that it came when the lower house was about to vote on the landmark Cheaper Medicines Bill.

This was the reason Palawan Rep. Antonio Alvarez did not join the presidential entourage.

Alvarez is chair of the committee on trade and industry, which consolidated more than 20 bills seeking to lower the prices of medicines in the country.

"I was in the Malacañang list since last year, but I had to back out," he told the INQUIRER. "Our work on the cheaper

medicines bill was not yet done. It would be embarrassing to leave."

The INQUIRER yesterday phoned the offices of each of the lawmakers on the Malacañang protocol list. At least 27 lawmakers were confirmed to have joined the European trip.

Meeting the king and queen

Spanish King Carlos I and Queen Sofia de Grecia formally met with Ms Arroyo and her husband in an elaborate welcome ceremony in Madrid yesterday morning (afternoon in Manila) which evoked historical and sentimental memories for both countries.

Ms Arroyo is the second Philippine

President after her late father, President Diosdado Macapagal, to officially visit Spain. During the 1962 state visit, then presidential daughter Gloria Macapagal joined her father, a trip which she said evoked both "historical and sentimental memories."

During an elaborate ceremony at 10:45 a.m. here (5:45 p.m. in Manila), Ms Arroyo was given arrival honors, complete with a 21-gun salute and a full military parade, at the courtyard of the Palacio de el Pardo, the residence for visiting heads of state and monarchs.

Soon after the Spanish monarchs arrived and took their places of honor in the Palace courtyard, Ms Arroyo and the First Gentleman arrived by car.

The king and queen welcomed and greeted the First couple before Ms Arroyo was ushered toward the Royal Guard formation, signaling the start of the arrival honors.

Filipinos in Madrid

From there, the First Couple motored to the Spanish Senate where Ms Arroyo was met by the Senate President and the President of the Chamber of Deputies Manuel Marin Gonzales.

Ms Arroyo and her husband had a flurry of activities in Madrid late yesterday as they laid a wreath at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier at Plaza de la Lealtad, had a private lunch with the Spanish royalty at the Palacio de la Zarzuela, visited the Ayuntamiento de Madrid (City Hall) and met with Spanish politicians and businessmen.

The day was capped by a gala dinner hosted by the king and queen at the Palacio Real de Madrid, the official residence of the monarchs.

Ms Arroyo officially started her four-day state visit to Spain late Sunday (Monday in Manila) by meeting with Filipino professionals and other overseas Filipino workers who gathered at the La Salle Colegio Nuestra Señora de las Maravillas.

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PESTS, falling yields, and the lure of higher-paying jobs outside the farm threaten the future of the rice terraces, one of the Philippines' top tourist draws.

Tourists, worms main threats to rice terraces

BATAD—AFTER PUTTING HIS SEEDLINGS TO BED IN THE world-famous Banaue rice terraces in the northern Philippines, farmer Gabriel Balicdon works as a tourist guide and buys rice from the grocer.

Built by Ifugao—mountain farmers and woodcarvers—at about the same time the Pyramids of Egypt and the Great Wall of

China were being constructed, the terraces look like giant staircases leading to the clouds.

But now migration, the lure of easy tourist money and a plague of giant earthworms imperil the 2,000-year-old structures that follow the contours of the Cordilleras mountains.

Endangered

The flooded terraced paddies that draw nearly 100,000 tourists a year have since 2001 been on the "endangered list" of the UN's World Heritage sites.

"We need to protect our heritage, but young people no longer want to work the farm. If the paddy crumbles they do not know how to repair it," said Balicdon.

The 46-year-old owner of four plots on the amphitheater-shaped terraces in the village of Batad, not far from the town of Banaue, does not produce enough for his family of nine, so he looks for odd jobs to make ends meet in the six months between planting and harvesting the aromatic upland rice.

"In the summer we go to Banaue to buy rice," Balicdon said, smiling at the irony.

Tourism draw

Neighbor Simon Illog, 46, gave up farming in 1989 to open a tourist inn, one of seven concrete structures on a ridge overlooking the fields.

He says it is difficult to find farm hands to maintain his inheritance, and wonders if tourists will still come if the main attraction is no more.

"The terraces on the peripheral areas are falling into ruin," he said.

It took Nestor Bucacah, 57, three months, using mud and rock, to repair the retaining wall of a plot that had been gnawed away by foot-long (30-centimeter) earthworms that are slowly taking over the Batad fields.

"My son works in the city as a driver. He would rather help me here but we need his wages to buy meat," he said.

"People all want a higher quality of life and the amenities that modern times can offer," said Marilyn Bartina, an official of the Ifugao Cultural Heritage office that is working to preserve the terraces.

Abandonment

"So they send their children to school but the graduates don't go back to the terraces and farm, and they (the terraces) fall into disrepair."

The terraces are also drying up due to deforestation at the watersheds above the farms, Bartina said, as local craftsmen cut down trees to use the roots for carving images of Ifugao gods.

Rice terraces are common across the Cordilleras, and the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization's (Unesco) Heritage Center has highlighted the visual feasts located in Ifugao province—Batad and nearby Bangaan, the clusters in Kiangan town, the extensive plots around Mayoyao and the structures in Hungduan that radiate like spider webs.

Inheritance

The plots are handed down from one generation to the next, "but the first born always gets the lion's share," said Marieta Hangdaan, a provincial tourism official.

Other siblings leave and burn nearby forests for temporary farms or migrate to neighboring provinces or abroad.

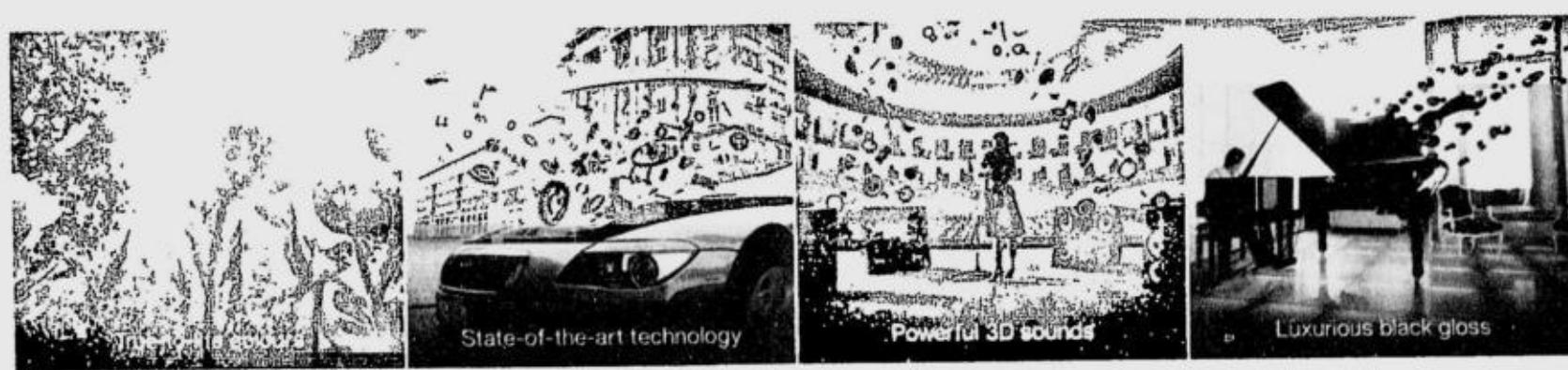
Older folk do not particularly like the tourists, who totter along the narrow paddy walls with their cameras. Electricity reaches only the tourist inns, and many of the locals go about their lives much like their ancestors did—wearing loincloths, milling rice by hand, weaving clothes with hand-looms, and chewing a fiery mix of betel nut and lime.

Vanishing culture

But some have adjusted quickly to a cash-based economy, leading to fears that the local culture will soon disappear.

"The culture of the people there is eroding faster than the terraces," Augusto Vilalal, head of the Philippine committee of the Paris-based International Council on Monuments and Sites, said in an interview in Manila.

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TUESDAY, DECEMBER 4, 2007

2,000 trees planted to preserve fruit bats

SAN JUAN, BATANGAS—WITH slash-and-burn farming wiping out the habitat of giant fruit bats in the mountains of San Juan, residents planted on Sunday 2,000 fruit seedlings in order to restore the bats' homes.

The project is part of the Green Philippines program of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, which aims to plant around 20 million trees during the year nationwide.

Fruit bats live only in the tropical and subtropical regions of the Eastern Hemisphere—particularly in Africa,

Asia, Australasia and Oceania. They feed either by eating fruits or licking nectar from flowers.

Bat time

Residents of Barangay Laiya Aplaya in San Juan usually observe fruit bats flying in the night sky at 5 p.m. to 6 p.m.

Councilor Noel Pasco, however, said in an interview that slash-and-burn farming, or "kaingin," in the mountains had effectively destroyed fruit trees, which are habitats of the bats.

He claimed that based on municipal records, the giant

fruit bat population in the San Juan-Lobo Mountain Range had already diminished to only 1,000 today from around 10,000 in the 1900s.

Planted within the mountains and riverbanks in Laiya Aplaya were seedlings of guava, langka (breadfruit), atis and cassava.

Target

Pasco said more trees would be planted in the coming weeks in order to reach the 4,000-target for the year.

He said the seedlings would bear fruit in three years, which

would help restore the bat habitat by providing food and shelter to the species.

The official added that the newly planted seedlings would help fight global warming and soil erosion in the mountain areas.

In a trip with Pasco's group at the San Juan-Lobo Mountain Range, the INQUIRER witnessed pruned fruit trees as a result of kaingin along the slopes.

There were even men in horses carrying sacks of charcoal to the plains.

Residents said the charcoal was being purchased by Manila

traders for P150 per sack.

Education lack

Barangay chair Wensley Llana recognized that the mountain people's lack of formal education and livelihood were driving them to slash-and-burn farming, which destroys the forest and reduces the bat population.

He said at least 150 people were now depending on kaingin for survival despite a prohibition under the Philippine Forestry Code.

"There's a strong possibility of bat extinction if we don't act

now," he said.

To prevent further deforestation, the municipal government and the village officials plan to enforce a total ban in the transport of forest products, like wood and charcoal from the mountains by Dec. 10.

Llana said the enforcement would start with information dissemination.

San Juan, a first-class municipality in Batangas about 115 kilometers from Manila, is popular for its white sand beaches. Marlon Alexander Lustro, Inquirer Southern Luzon

300,000 ha of forests now in private hands

CITY OF SAN FERNANDO—Nearly 300,000 hectares of forest land in Central Luzon are now in the hands of private corporations, cooperatives and individuals through various agreements, documents from the Department of Environment and Natural Resources showed.

The figure represented about 38 percent of the 589,497 ha of forest land in the region, according to the DENR.

Asked what has been the government's policy for the remaining forests, DENR regional executive director Regidor de Leon said: "We welcome investors who would want to develop forest areas. If they qualify, we shall issue them tenurial agreements."

Corporate work

At least 550,922 ha of forest are within timberlands while 38,575 ha are within alienable or disposable lands, according to satellite mappings done by the National Mapping and Resource Information Authority (Namria) and the Forest Management Bureau in 2003.

Corporate forestry contracts represent a bulk of plantations as of Oct. 15.

Two timber license agreements (TLAs) signed in Aurora during the administration of then President Ferdinand Marcos reached 36,688 ha.

The 22 industrial forest management agreements (Ifmas) in Aurora, Bulacan, Nueva Ecija, Tarlac and Zambales covered 110,333 ha.

The 287 socialized industrial forest management agreement (Sifmas) reached 8,620 ha, more than half of which are in Tarlac.

Long term

DENR records showed that 125 community-based forest management agreements (CBF-MA) covered 69,129 ha while family-based and private tree plantations reached 5,195 ha.

Ifma, processed through DENR Administrative Order No. 99-53 for 500 ha and up, last for 25 years and are renew-

'We welcome investors who would want to develop forest areas...'

Deluge of applications

He said the DENR offices in cities and provinces were "processing more applications."

De Leon dismissed reports that tenurial agreements were being used as fronts for illegal logging.

"(That will not happen) within the present system where the local governments and people's organizations are active in monitoring," he said.

"We detect all the activities. DENR people are extra vigilant," he said.

Reports reaching the INQUIRER said that the agreements were used as access to thickly forested areas.

Except for those covered by Ifmas that had been approved more than 10 years ago, most of the plantations were not expected to harvest or transport logs this year or the next two years, Saduste said.

"Much of the plantations are young," he said.

De Leon said a log ban had been imposed in Aurora, which has the largest forest cover in Central Luzon at 238,776 ha.

The ban was maintained in Aurora and Quezon following the November and December 2004 landslides that killed more than 700 people there. Tonette Orejas, Inquirer Central Luzon

State of calamity declared in Cagayan

TUGUEGARAO CITY—THE provincial board of Cagayan declared the province under a state of calamity on Monday after damage to crops, livestock and infrastructure left by Typhoon "Mina" last week reached P400 million.

The declaration was recommended by Gov. Alvaro Antonio, also chair of the provincial disaster coordinating council, after an assessment

of typhoon damage here.

The board, however, asked the provincial government to appeal to President Macapagal-Arroyo for more calamity funds since the province has only P26 million left for that purpose.

Local officials said three bridges were damaged and needed immediate repair.

Residents of Rizal town, they said, needed help because relief goods could not be delivered

because the Mauanang River remained swollen.

The provincial government asked the provincial social welfare and development office to do everything it could to reach residents of Rizal.

The provincial board asked concerned agencies to buy carabao and distribute them to farmers, either through loans or grants. Estanislao Caldez, Inquirer Northern Luzon

Estafa cases filed vs 8 in power co-op scams

CALAMBA CITY—THE PROSECUTOR'S office of Lipa City has endorsed the filing of criminal cases against eight former officers of the Batangas II Electric Cooperative (Batelec II) for their alleged participation in two corruption-marred projects of the country's biggest electric cooperative.

Charged with estafa before the regional trial court in Lipa were Reynaldo Panaligan, past president of the power coop's board of directors, and former board members Tita Matulin, Jose Rizal Remo, Isagani Casalme, Cipriano Roxas, Cesario Gutierrez, Celso Landicho and Eduardo Tagle.

Computerization project

The cases stemmed from the controversial awarding of a P75-million computerization project to a 9-day-old company, which had a paid-up capital of only P62,500, more than two years ago.

The charges, filed by incumbent Batelec II board president Ruperto Manalo, included alleged overpricing in the purchase of 10 boom trucks worth P6.1 million.

Panaligan, a reporter of the Manila Bulletin newspaper, and his co-accused allegedly conspired to pass a resolution that awarded the multimillion-peso computerization deal to I-solv Technologies Inc. (I-solv) on April 15, 2005, barely nine days after the company obtained a registration from the Securities and Exchange Commission.

No bidding

State prosecutors Florencio dela Cruz and Nolibien Quiambao, who conducted the preliminary investigation, forwarded the criminal case to the Lipa RTC on Nov. 20.

They said the accused "with abuse of confidence, conspired willfully, unlawfully and feloniously to defraud the cooperative by entering into contract" with I-solv without proper bidding.

The accused failed to get the approval of the National Electrification Administration (NEA), the government agency which has supervision over all electric cooperatives, before starting the project, the prosecutors said.

No safeguards

They said the accused also did not ensure "safeguards in the contract to protect the interest of Batelec II consumers such as provisions for a performance bond, penalty clause in case I-solv defaults on the project, and cost per unit of the services."

The decision of Panaligan and his group was "damaging and prejudicial" to the consumer-members of the power coop, they said.

They noted that despite the payment of more than P72 million, I-solv has yet to fully install the new computer system of Batelec II.

In a statement, Manalo said that although the present officers were pleased with the filing of the cases, they were upset after the prosecutors did not file a syndicated estafa against Panaligan and his group. Marlon Ramos, Inquirer Southern Luzon

Ex-driver builds giant Santas for children

By Tonette Orejas
Inquirer Central Luzon

CLARK FREEPORT—LEAVING a life of driving for a rich family and then reinventing himself as a craftsman proved right for Fred Velasques.

On Saturday, Velasques buoyed sagging spirits amid the Christmas season by making a 20-foot figure of a sitting and smiling Santa Claus that SM City Clark touts to be the biggest in the Philippines.

This piece made from fiberglass, which he and his 21 employees carved, came in the 11th year of his business, Candelleria Handicraft.

"We made many people happy, especially the children," Velasques, 55, told the INQUIRER minutes after SM executives, Pampanga Gov. Eddie Paniliao and Clark International Airport Corp. executive vice president Alex Cauguiran unveiled the gi-

ant Santa Claus in a red-carpet event.

His company did not charge anything for this undertaking.

"Seeing smiles on the faces of young and old mall goers was enough," Velasques said.

Around 2,000 shoppers filled the first and second floors near the event center to catch a glimpse of the Yuletide character.

Velasques and his family have settled and done business in Mabalacat, Pampanga, since starting the enterprise in 1996.

It took two months for his team to finish their first giant figure.

He said he finished only first year in high school and ventured in a field that he hardly knew but was willing to try.

"This entailed industry and hard work," Velasques said.

Michelle Catap, a staff member of the SM City Clark public relations department, said Velasques offered to make the gi-

ant Santa Claus in a red-carpet media.

He measured the firm's success by the stable employment it gives to at least 30 workers.

And, of course, that includes not anymore living on a low monthly wage.

He ended his career in driving because "walang asenso dun (I won't earn enough.)"

His employer, a resident of a plush subdivision in Makati City, let him go and bade him good luck.

Velasques said he gathered all the courage he could for the career change.

He said he finished only first year in high school and ventured in a field that he hardly knew but was willing to try.

"This entailed industry and hard work," Velasques said.

Michelle Catap, a staff member of the SM City Clark public relations department, said Velasques offered to make the gi-

ant Santa Claus to be able to "spread joy to the children."

Catap said Velasques asked that big carton boxes be placed around it to receive donations

Resin and fiberglass are his materials.

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ant Santa Claus to be able to "spread joy to the children."

Catap said Velasques asked that big carton boxes be placed around it to receive donations

of toys for poor children. SM City Clark would turn over the donations to the Department of Social Welfare and Development in Pampanga.

TONETTE OREJAS/INQUIRER CENTRAL LUZON

FRED VELASQUES swears he has no regrets leaving a driving job. His 11-year-old business made what the SM City Clark touts as the biggest ever fiberglass image of Santa Claus in the Philippines.

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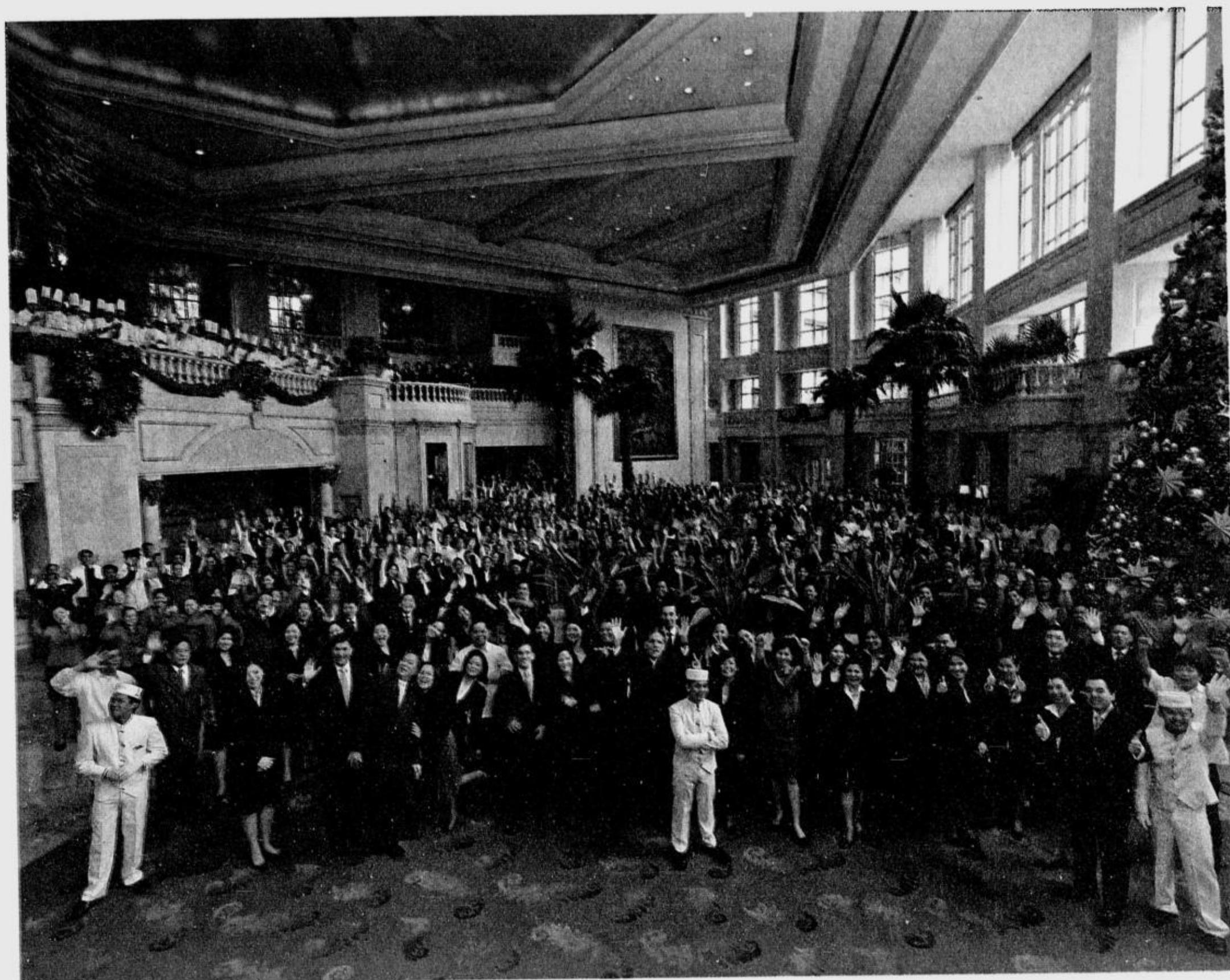
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FRED VELASQUES swears he has



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Examinees ask PRC: Scrap test retake order

Due process first before voiding results, say petitioners

By Margaux C. Ortiz

MORE THAN 100 EXAMINEES DURING THE Nov. 17 and 18 civil engineering licensure tests held a rally yesterday to demand that the Professional Regulation Commission set aside its decision nullifying the results of the examinations and ordering a retake on Jan. 12 next year.

Examinees Neil Erich Galicia and Dianne May Casimiro, who spearheaded the protest in front of the PRC office on Nicanor Reyes Street in Manila, said it was their duty and responsibility to protest against the injustice being committed against them.

"We are not afraid of retaking the examinations, but due process is needed before the PRC can decide on nullifying the results of two of our subjects," Galicia, a graduate of Ateneo de

Naga, said in an interview.

More than 4,700 civil engineering graduates took the board exams last Nov. 17 and 18.

On Nov. 26, the PRC announced that the test results in two of the three subjects—Hydraulics and Geotechnical Engineering and Structural Engineering and Construction—would be nullified after two examinees were caught cheating in the two areas. The two were

found to have used cell phones which contained answers to 30 questions, 21 of which turned out to be correct.

Galicia said the actions of the two should not be taken against other examinees who are innocent.

"It is also wrong to compare our situation with that of the June 2006 nursing licensure examinees," he added, stressing that while the nursing licensure exams involved the leakage of test answers, the civil engineering board exams entailed the alleged cheating done by only two examinees.

In their petition asking the PRC to reconsider its decision and immediately order the release of the results of the Nov. 17 and 18 board exams, Casimiro and more than 200 graduates reasoned that they

got high marks in the hydraulics subject because the questions presented were "basic, fundamental and elementary concepts which future civil engineers should and must know."

The PRC had said that "after evaluation of the examination results in the Hydraulics and Geotechnical Engineering subject, it found the results to be statistically improbable considering the unusually high grades or ratings obtained by the examinees."

The examinees also described as alarming the government agency's statement.

"For one, there is no law, or any rule, regulation, resolution, or memorandum issued by the Honorable Commission that makes 'unusually high grade/rating' a ground for nullifying examination results,"

A CIVIL engineering graduate joins a rally in front of the Professional Regulation Commission office in Manila after the agency ordered a retake of two subjects in the Nov. 17 and 18 board exams. REM ZAMORA

they said.

The petitioners also pointed out that "There is likewise no evidence to link the high grades or ratings obtained by the examinees in Hydraulics and Geotechnical Engineering to the discovery of the mobile phones."

Jobert Pahilga, lawyer of the civil engineering graduates, said that if the PRC fails to act on their petition, they would try to obtain a temporary restraining order from the court.

The TRO, Pahilga explained, would hopefully prevent the

PRC from holding the second set of examinations on Jan. 12.

"PRC Chair Leonor Tripion-Rosero's secretary promised us that she would meet the examinees within the week," Casimiro said.

"We should be able to take our oath on Dec. 15 and apply for jobs after that. Unfortunately, our lives have been put on hold because of this," she added.

The INQUIRER tried to talk to Rosero but her secretary said that she was unavailable.

Food awareness program launched in Mandaluyong

By Kristine L. Alave

feeding activities.

EAT YOUR VEGETABLES AND do better in school.

This was the message of officials from the education and health departments yesterday as they launched a food awareness program to encourage schoolchildren to eat nutritious meals and not junk food.

The two departments, along with Nissin-Universal Robina Corp., kicked off the project at the Eulogio Rodriguez Elementary School in Mandaluyong City.

The initiative is part of the joint campaign of the Department of Education and the Department of Health to inculcate healthy eating habits among schoolchildren.

Every year, the DepEd and the DOH, along with a private partner, conduct a school-to-school nationwide campaign that seeks to institutionalize nutrient supplementing and

Health Undersecretary Ethelyn Nieto talked to elementary students about the benefits of eating fruits, vegetables and doing regular exercises.

According to Nieto, the junk food that most children eat contain too much sugar and other chemicals that lead to lifestyle diseases such as cancer and diabetes.

"That's why the older generations live longer. They didn't have junk food," she told the students.

Renee Yabut, Nissin-Universal product manager, said her company and the government agencies would bring health experts and nutritionists to the various schools to discuss food intake with the children.

Cops pursue crackdown on dogfights in Rizal

By Kristine L. Alave

Kabigting identified the organizer of the dogfight arena in Tanay as Jun Cuevas, a resident of Binangongan, Rizal.

Cuevas was arrested in Manrose Farm in Barangay Sampaloc when the police raided the area at around 6:30 p.m. Saturday based on a tip from an informant.

Sixteen pit bull dogs were rescued from the arena.

Police said the dogs had sustained wounds from fighting and would be turned over to animal welfare groups for treatment.

All the arrested persons would be charged with violating the Animal Welfare Act and illegal gambling, the police said.

This was the second high profile dogfight club raid conducted in Rizal province, which animal rights groups consider the center of the illegal game.

Last March, the Philippine National Police Criminal Investigation and Detection Group raided a dogfight arena in Antipolo City and arrested 14 people, including three Thais who flew into the country with their pit bulls just to participate in the game.



Beware of unlicensed optometrists, NBI warns

By Tina G. Santos

THE NATIONAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION yesterday warned the public to watch out for unlicensed optometrists working in some optical shops.

The warning came after the recent arrest by agents of the NBI National Capital Region of two women who had posed as

eye doctors in Antipolo City and Cainta, Rizal province.

Charged with violating Republic Act 8050 or the Revised Optical Law of 1997 were Maria Anita Calpito, 38, and Marlene Carlos, 36, both employees of the Ace-deo Optical Clinic.

The suspects were optometry graduates but they did not have a license from the Professional

Regulation Commission, the NBI said.

They were arrested based on a complaint filed by Dr. Charlie Ho, national president of the Integrated Philippine Association of Optometrists, who claimed that he had received information that Ace-deo Optical, reportedly owned by Dr. Maria Medarlene San Agustin-Gatapia, was al-

legedly employing unlicensed optometrists, the NBI added.

The suspects were arrested after they conducted an eye examination of NBI agents who had posed as customers.

Gatapia will also be charged administratively in the PRC and the Philippine Board of Optometry, said lawyer Edward Villarta, chief of the NBI-NCR.

The task force, which has until Dec. 15 to rid streets in the metropolis of colorum vehicles, was formed mainly to protect public utility vehicle drivers and their operators from unfair competition. In return, the PUV drivers and operators promised not to ask for a fare hike.

The confiscated vehicles were taken to the Ultra compound in Ortigas. They can be claimed by their owners after payment of the corresponding fine.

Most of the drivers whose vehicles were impounded had been apprehended for plying a route outside their franchise, for operating without a fran-

chise or registration or for driving a vehicle with defective parts or accessories.

Reyes said the task force

would continue operating until it meets its goal of ridding Metro streets of illegally operating transport vehicles.

DID YOU KNOW

IN 1579, Pope Gregory XIII issued a Papal Bull establishing the Diocese of Manila. In the same year, King Philip II of Spain recommended Dominican priest Fray Domingo de Salazar for the position of bishop of Manila.

Salazar left Spain in May 1580 and reached Manila on Sept. 17, 1581. Days later, he started the construction of the Manila Cathedral to replace the old parish church. The first Manila Cathedral was made of wood, bamboo and nipa.

Fray Domingo de Salazar passed away on Dec. 4, 1594.

Cyril L. Bonabente, Inquirer Research

Court junks petition filed vs Pasay City SK polls bet

By Julie M. Aurelio

A PASAY CITY COURT HAS DENIED a petition seeking to prevent Mayor Wenceslao Trinidad's son from taking over as president of the city's Sangguniang Kabataan Federation.

According to Judge Edwin Ramizo of the Pasay City Regional Trial Court Branch 114, the petitioners failed to "establish extreme urgency and that they will suffer grave injustice and irreparable injury by reason of the ... SK Federation officers."

Ramizo's decision, which was signed on Nov. 28, was prompted by a petition filed several weeks ago by Denise Erika Pesebre and several other SK chairs who won in the Oct. 29 synchronized barangay and SK elections.

Pesebre and the others had asked the court to declare as null and void the results of the SK Federation elections held last Nov. 11.

Named in their petition was Jon Trinidad, son of the Pasay mayor. The young Trinidad, as SK chair of Barangay 88, had been elected president of the city's SK Federation.

In their petition, Pesebre pointed out that since she and the other newly elected SK chairs have yet to assume office on Nov. 30, they have no legal capacity to elect or be elected as officers of the SK Federation.

Ramizo, however, pointed out that the petitioners were unable to show that they would suffer "irreparable injury" after the election of the SK Federation officers was held earlier than scheduled.

According to Pesebre's petition, the Department of the Interior and Local Government had set the federation elections on Dec. 6.

"Even if the election of officers and board members of the Liga and SK Federation (already) took place, the newly elected officers cannot assume,

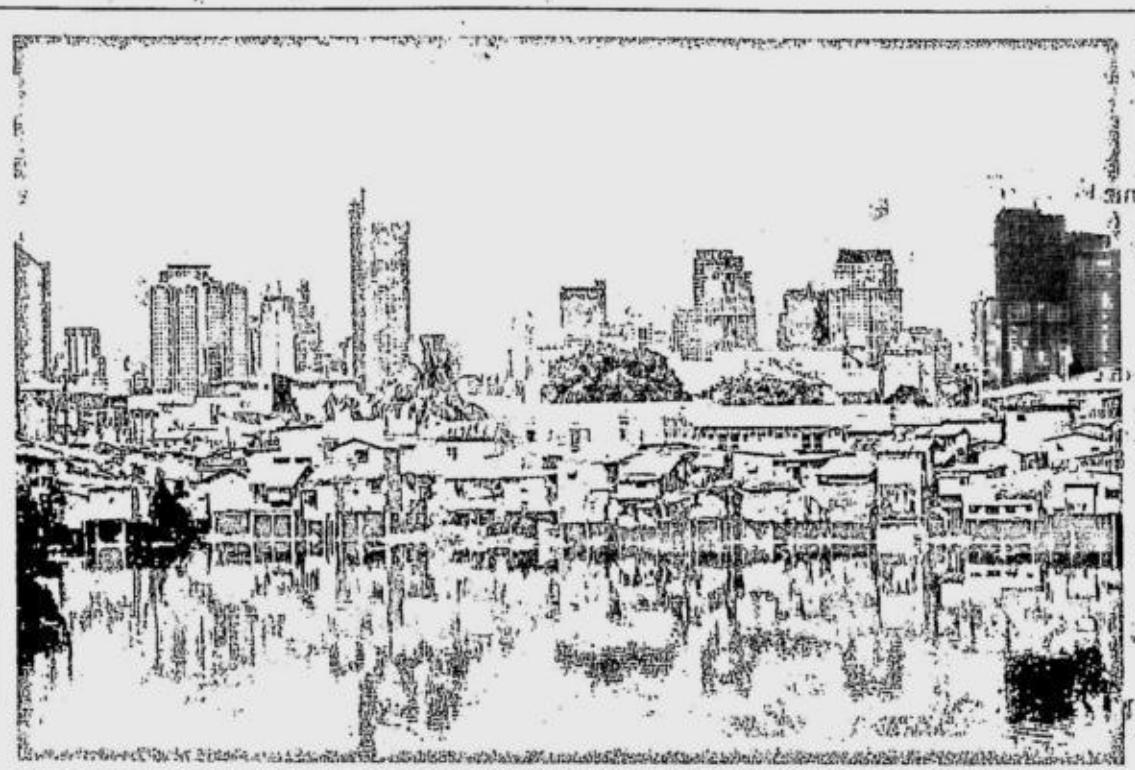
exercise and discharge the rights, duties and powers as such. This is so because their term of office will only commence at noon of Nov. 30," Ramizo explained.

"Therefore, there being no act to be restrained, there is no reason for the court to grant the issuance of a temporary restraining order," he added.

In their defense, Trinidad and the other officials had pointed out that since the federation election should be held under the supervision of the DILG, the case should also be resolved by the DILG and not by the court.

They added that the matter had already been brought to the attention of the DILG as Mayor Trinidad was asked to comment on a DILG special report on the incident.

"As regards the issue of jurisdiction, the court resolves to hold in abeyance the resolution of the said matter," Ramizo said in his five-page order.



WORLDS APART
Skyscrapers in Makati City tower over a community of shanties in Maricaban, Pasay City.

EDWIN BACASMAS

Zamboanga City Electric Cooperative, Inc.
(ZAMCELCO)
Zamboanga City

INVITATION TO BID

The Zamboanga City Electric Cooperative, Inc. (ZAMCELCO) at Pulik, this city per requisite under Board Policies on Pre-Qualifications, and Bids and Awards, invites ALL interested Bidders/Suppliers to bid for the supply of the following electrical materials/items, to wit:

No.	Quantity	Unit	Item Description
1	36	PCS	ANCHOR EXPANDING TYPE AGENCY PRICE : P 408.00
2	42	PCS	BOLT, EYE 1/2 X 9 AGENCY PRICE : P 70.82
3	23	PCS	BOLT, EYE 5/8 X 10 AGENCY PRICE : P73.95
4	2	PCS	BOLT, EYE 5/8 X 18 AGENCY PRICE : P 90.48
5	4	PCS	BOLT, MACHINE 1/2 X 6 AGENCY PRICE : P 15.74
6	6	PCS	BOLT, MACHINE 1/2 X 10 AGENCY PRICE : P 29.23
7	22	PCS	BOLT, MACHINE 5/8 X 8 AGENCY PRICE : P 33.09
8	32	PCS	BOLT, MACHINE 5/8 X 10 AGENCY PRICE : P 35.24
9	28	PCS	BOLT, MACHINE 5/8 X 12 AGENCY PRICE : P 38.16
10	10	PCS	BOLT, SINGLE UPSET 5/8 X 10 AGENCY PRICE : P 63.11
11	10	PCS	BOLT, DOUBLE UPSET 5/8 X 10 AGENCY PRICE : P 69.12
12	18	PCS	BRACKET SECONDARY DEADEND AGENCY PRICE : P 88.25
13	6	PCS	CLAMP SUSPENSION AGENCY PRICE : P 495.18
14	8	PCS	CLAMP BONDING AGENCY PRICE : P 38.62
15	72	PCS	CLAMP GUY DEADEND 3 BOLT AGENCY PRICE : P 127.79
16	8	PCS	CLAMP LOOP DEADEND AGENCY PRICE : P 41.58
17	10	PCS	CLAMP DEADEND STRAIN (GUN TYPE) AGENCY PRICE : P 398.71
18	3	PCS	CLAMP HOTLINE AGENCY PRICE : P 300.45
19	28	PCS	CLEVIS SECONDARY SWINGING AGENCY PRICE : P 66.84
20	6	PCS	CLEVIS SHACKLE ANCHOR AGENCY PRICE : P 88.44
21	7500	MTRS	CONDUCTOR BARE #10 ACSR AGENCY PRICE : P 36.33
22	5000	MTRS	CONDUCTOR BARE #2 ACSR AGENCY PRICE : P 24.20
23	500	MTRS	CONDUCTOR DUPLEX #2 AGENCY PRICE : P 49.68
24	12	PCS	CONNECTOR COMP. YHD 150 AGENCY PRICE : P 72.11
25	2	PCS	CROSSARM B AGENCY PRICE : P 1,520.64
26	3	SETS	CUT-OUT ARR. COMB. W/LA. AGENCY PRICE : P 5,056.73
27	2	UNITS	DIST. TRANSFORMER, 10KVA CONV. AGENCY PRICE : P 45,313.35
28	2	PCS	FUSE LINK, 3A TYPE K AGENCY PRICE : P 99.39
29	1	PC	FUSE LINK, 6A TYPE K AGENCY PRICE : P 106.76
30	72	PCS	GUY HOOK J-TYPE AGENCY PRICE : P 34.67
31	24	PCS	INSULATOR SPOOL 3 DIA. AGENCY PRICE : P 34.35
32	32	PCS	INSULATOR SPOOL 1-3/4 DIA. AGENCY PRICE : P 17.60
33	68	PCS	LOCK NUT 5/8 AGENCY PRICE : P 7.61
34	5	PCS	NUT, LOCK 1/2 AGENCY PRICE : P 7.61
35	8	PCS	NUT, OVAL EYE 5/8 AGENCY PRICE : P 68.61
36	4	PCS	PIN, CROSSARM LONG SHANK AGENCY PRICE : P 161.38
37	50	PCS	PIN, INSULATOR 7-.6KV AGENCY PRICE : P 110.13
38	46	PCS	PIN POLE TOP 20 LONG AGENCY PRICE : P 161.38
39	36	PCS	ROD ANCHOR 5/8 X 7 AGENCY PRICE : P 286.50
40	16	PCS	INSULATOR SUSPENSION (SILICONE) AGENCY PRICE : P 1,552.00
41	62	PCS	WASHER SQUARE 2-1/4IN. (5/8) AGENCY PRICE : P 10.15
42	36	PCS	WASHER SQUARE FLAT 4 X 4 X 1/2 AGENCY PRICE : P 70.59
43	1200	FT	WIRE GUY, 3/8 7 STRAND AGENCY PRICE : P 18.90
			NOTE: FOR CALIBATU, LAMISAHAN LINE EXTENSION PROJECT

You may secure the Pre-qualification Requirements from the office of the Finance Department, ZAMCELCO Complex in Pulik, this city anytime during office hours and submit the same upon completion of all requirements thereof.

Submission of the Pre-qualification Requirements shall not be later than 5:00 pm of December 11, 2007 and no documents appertaining thereto, shall be accepted thereafter.

All applicants will be duly notified as to the results of the pre-qualification eligibility process. Only those who are pre-qualified will be allowed to participate in the bidding. A post-qualification may be conducted accordingly hereafter.

Bidding will be conducted on December 20, 2007.

Sealed bid in duplicate copies should be submitted to the Committee on Bids and Awards at the office of the Finance Department at the above-mentioned address on or before 2:00 p.m. of December 20, 2007. Five percent (5%) Bidder's Bond is required as a matter of policy.

The right to reject any or all bids, to waive any formality therein, or to accept such bid as may be considered advantageous to the coop is hereby reserved as an absolute prerogative of ZAMCELCO.

(Sgd.) REINERIO R. RAMOS
General Manager

(PDI - Dec. 3 & 4, 2007)

in their defense, Trinidad and the other officials had pointed out that since the federation election should be held under the supervision of the DILG, the case should also be resolved by the DILG and not by the court.

They added that the matter had already been brought to the attention of the DILG as Mayor Trinidad was asked to comment on a DILG special report on the incident.

"As regards the issue of jurisdiction, the court resolves to hold in abeyance the resolution of the said matter," Ramizo said in his five-page order.

tending Mass with his family at the Our Lady of Mercy Parish Church on Susano Road, in front of the Susano Market, when he noticed a commotion outside.

He told the INQUIRER that he first made sure his wife and 5-year-old daughter were safe before he went outside the church to see what the matter was.

"I saw a man running trying to stab innocent bystanders with his long knife. I suspected that he was very drunk," the police officer said in Filipino, referring to the suspect, Rey Barantes.

Arim said he immediately drew his .9mm service firearm and introduced himself as a policeman, ordering Barantes to lay down his weapon. However, the suspect lunged at him, leaving him with no choice but to shoot to defend himself, he added.

Barantes was hit in the abdomen and left shoulder. He is still undergoing treatment at

the Quezon City General Hospital.

"He was attacking people. I could not allow that to happen even if I was not on duty," Arim said. The police officer immediately surrendered and handed over his service firearm and the suspect's knife to the Quezon City Police District-Criminal Investigation and Detection Unit.

Barantes, it was learned, had just been released from the Quezon City Jail.

The buck stops at GMA's doorsteps

THE PENINSULA MANILA OVERKILL betrayed the desperation of the Arroyo administration in showing that it was in control.

The administration shot itself in the foot when it had media people covering the "coup-medy" arrested, handcuffed and bundled off to Bicutan.

Even during the martial law years, media people covering hostage-taking and plane-hijacking situations were left alone to do their job.

Knowing the mind of President Gloria, she issued the arrest order, then backed down and expressed "regret that police procedures became a problem for media, even for a few hours."

Result: The police, who were just following orders from Malacañang, got all the blame.

I have known Director General Sonny Razon, chief of the Philippine National Police, for number of years.

Until last Thursday's "coup," Razon was friendly to the media.

Journalists had easy access to him, and he was quite chummy with them.

I have also known the President up close and personal, that's why I'm saying this: When the going gets rough, she blames everybody but herself.

I'd like to go back to that time when I asked the President's permission to look into the alleged smuggling activities of two siblings. She readily acceded.

GMA even told me, through her then

Republic of the Philippines
Department of Science and Technology
ADVANCED SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY INSTITUTE
ASTI Bldg., Technology Park Complex,
C.P. Garcia Ave., U.P. Diliman,
Quezon City, Philippines
Tel. Nos. (632) 426-3694/426-9764 Fax: (632) 426-9764

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Advanced Science and Technology Institute (ASTI), Department of Science and Technology invites bona fide suppliers to apply for eligibility and to bid for the following item:

ONE UNIT OF DVD DUPLICATOR

The Bid documents shall be available at the ASTI Property Section from December 04, 2007 upon payment of non-refundable fee in the amount of P1,000.00.

Eligibility documents, technical and financial proposals (2 copies each) in three envelopes must be submitted at the ASTI-BAC Secretariat, ASTI Bldg. C.P. Garcia Ave., U.P. Diliman, Quezon City not later than 02:00 p.m. on December 13, 2007 and shall be opened at the ASTI Training Room, Ground Floor ASTI Bldg., C.P. Garcia Ave., U.P. Diliman, Quezon City, on the same date in the presence of the participating bidder.

For more information, please call the BAC Secretariat at Tel. No. 426-9764 and 426-3694 and you may look for Ms. Neth Caser or Ms. Liza Cleriana.

ASTI-BAC reserves the right to waive any formality in the response to the eligibility requirements and to this invitation. ASTI-BAC further reserves the right to reject any or all proposals, or declare a failure of bidding, or not award the contract, and makes no assurance that contract shall be entered into as a result of this invitation.

(Sgd.) JOSE ERIC S. MAGLANQUE
Chairman

(PDI - Dec. 4, 2007)

METROBRIEFS

Count your change, police warn shoppers

AFTER doing your Christmas shopping in Divisoria, count your change before you leave. Manila policemen aired this warning to shoppers after they arrested a sidewalk vendor for shortchanging one of his customers. Reynaldo Santos, 49, of Parola Compound, Tondo, Manila, was later charged with estafa. Earlier, Rosalie Gingaya, 24, told the police that on Nov. 28, she bought three face towels from Santos for P30 and gave him P50. The suspect, she said, excused himself because he did not have enough change. He later returned with a wad of P20, P50 and P100 bills and counted out her change. When she came home, she later discovered that she was missing P200.

Allison W. Lopez

Caloocan, Calamba now sister-cities

CALOOCAN and Calamba have signed a memorandum of agreement making them sister-cities. The agreement was signed recently at the Makati Shangri-La Hotel by Caloocan City Mayor Enrico Echiverri and Calamba Mayor Joaquin Chipeco Jr. In a joint statement, the two leaders were optimistic the move would further foster the historical and cultural links of the two cities. "We are together because both our cities are historical and we, promised to help each other in times of crisis and disaster," the officials said.

Nancy C. Carvaljal

Creativity seminar-workshop for educators set

THE ALBERTO Enrico Educational Center (AEEC) will conduct a one-day seminar workshop on creativity, $E_{sm} = M_{ab}(C_{1x}C_{2x}C_{3x}C_{4x})$ Using Creativity for More Effective School Management, for principals and administrators on Dec. 12 at the Holiday Inn, Clark Field, Pampanga. The AEEC is a publishing and training center based in Marikina City. Those interested may call Marge and Mia at 6474374, 6473761, 6479054 and 6464020.

Sudan pardons British 'teddy bear' teacher

KHARTOUM—SUDANESE PRESIDENT Omar al-Beshir on Monday pardoned a British woman teacher jailed for 15 days for insulting religion by naming a teddy bear after the Prophet Mohammed, a presidential advisor said.

"She was pardoned thanks to the mediation of Lord Ahmed and Baroness Warsi. She will be released in about an hour," Mahjoub Fadil Badri said.

A Sudanese court last Thursday sentenced Gillian Gibbons to 15 days in prison for insulting reli-

gion by naming a teddy bear after Islam's prophet at the exclusive English school where she taught in Khartoum.

Two British Muslim peers, Lord Nazir Ahmed and Baroness Sayeeda Warsi from the upper house of parliament were on Monday meeting Beshir at the Republican Palace after flying to Khartoum in order to secure a pardon.

Wearing a traditional white gown and turban, Beshir received the peers in a relaxed atmosphere at a plush room at the palace decorated with white gilt-

upholstered sofas where reporters were briefly admitted.

The arrest and jail sentence of the 54-year-old mother of two sparked outrage in Britain and a diplomatic crisis between London and Khartoum, further straining relations already frayed over nearly five years of war in Darfur.

The British peers, who had been due to return home on Monday morning, delayed their departure at the last minute amid signs that their mission to secure Gibbons's release was gathering momentum.

"Some progress has been made. As a result of that progress and what we're hoping to achieve, we will not be leaving," Warsi told reporters late on Sunday.

Sudan enforces Islamic Sharia law in Khartoum, where alcohol is banned and most women dress modestly.

Thousands of people demonstrated on Friday after the main Muslim prayers in Khartoum, the conservative capital of the former British colony, against what they considered Gibbons's lenient sentence, with some calling for her

death.

Sudan's Committee of Muslim scholars said in a statement in the local press that Gibbons should not be released early because she was handed such a light sentence.

Being found guilty of insulting religion and inciting hatred in Sudan is punishable by up to six months in prison, 40 lashes and a fine.

Gibbons is said to have been well-treated during her incarceration at the secret location where she was being held for her own safety.

AFP



GIBBONS

REUTERS

Israel frees 429 Palestinian prisoners

RAMALLAH, WEST BANK—ISRAEL on Monday released 429 Palestinian prisoners, a gesture meant to strengthen moderate Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas after both sides decided at last week's US-sponsored Mideast conference to try to reach a peace deal in 2008.

The prisoners, most of them from President Mahmoud Abbas' Fatah movement, were given a joyous welcome as they arrived at military checkpoints in the West Bank and Gaza. Cars honked horns, tearful relatives raised Fatah flags and pictures of Abbas and some carried prisoners on their shoulders.

"There's nothing better than freedom," said Salem al-Saqqa, about 30, after he reached Gaza and kissed his mother. Al-Saqqa had served four years of an 11-year term, and said Abbas must do everything he can to win the release of the thousands still imprisoned by Israel.

The prisoners had begun their journey at dawn, lining up in a courtyard at the Ketziot Prison Camp in the southern Negev Desert. Wardens and security agents sitting at tables checked names against a list, clamped handcuffs on the prisoners and put them on waiting buses heading to the West Bank and Gaza.

The Israeli prison service said it sent 408 to the West Bank and 21 to Gaza.

Parents of some prisoners said they were eager to make up for lost time.

Abdel Raouf Injas, 52, was waiting at the Beitouniya checkpoint in the West Bank to greet his son, 31-year-old Khaled, whose 12-year sentence was cut in half. Injas said he wanted to get Khaled married as quickly as possible, and said his son planned to study for a master's degree at a West Bank university.

Injas said he had two more sons in prison. "I'm feeling good, but it's incomplete," he said of the release.

Israel is holding about 9,000 prisoners. Their freedom is a central Palestinian demand, and Monday's release—the third since July—was intended to strengthen Abbas in his struggle against the Islamic Hamas by showing Palestinians that moderation pays. AP



HAUNTING IMAGE OF 2007

One of RNP's Pictures of the Year: Sabira, mother of Sulejman Talovic, touches her son's face in an open casket before his funeral in the village of Talovici on March 3. The 18-year-old gunman shot five people to death in a Salt Lake City, Utah, shopping mall and was buried on Saturday in his native village in Bosnia. Sulejman was a survivor of the siege that ended in the Srebrenica massacre of 8,000 Muslims in Bosnia's 1992-95 war and left with his family for the United States in 1998.

REUTERS

Japanese study: 5-year-old chimp beats college kids in computer game

NEW YORK—JAPANESE RESEARCHERS pitted young chimps against human adults in two tests of short-term memory, and overall, the chimps won.

That challenges the belief of many people, including many scientists, that "humans are superior to chimpanzees in all cognitive functions," said researcher Tetsuro Matsuzawa of Kyoto University.

"No one can imagine that chimpanzees—young chimpanzees at the age of 5—have a better performance in a memory task than humans," he said in a statement.

Matsuzawa, a pioneer in studying the mental abilities of chimps, said even he was surprised. He and colleague Sana Inoue report the results in Tuesday's issue of the journal Current Biology.

One memory test included three 5-year-old chimps who'd been taught the order of Arabic numerals one through nine, and a dozen human volunteers.

They saw nine numbers displayed on a computer screen. When they touched the first number, the other eight turned into white squares. The test was to touch all these squares in the order of the numbers that used to be there.

Results showed that the chimps, while no more accurate

than the people, could do this faster.

One chimp, Ayumu, did the best. Researchers included him and nine college students in a second test.

This time, five numbers flashed on the screen only briefly before they were replaced by white squares. The challenge, again, was to touch these squares in the proper sequence.

When the numbers were displayed for about seven-tenths of a second, Ayumu and the college students were both able to do this correctly about 80 percent of the time.

But when the numbers were displayed for just four-tenths or two-tenths of a second, the chimp was the champ. The briefer of those times is too short to allow a look around the screen, and in those tests Ayumu still scored about 80 percent, while humans plunged to 40 percent.

That indicates Ayumu was better at taking in the whole pattern of numbers at a glance, the researchers wrote.

"It's amazing what this chimpanzee is able to do," said Elizabeth Lonsdorf, director of the Lester E. Fisher Center for the Study and Conservation of Apes at the Lincoln Park Zoo in Chicago.

The center studies the mental abilities of apes, but Lonsdorf didn't participate in the new study.

She admired Ayumu's performance when the numbers flashed only briefly on the screen.

"I just watched the video of that and I can tell you right now, there's no way I can do it," she said. "It's unbelievable. I can't even get the first two (squares)."

What's going on here? Even with six months of training, three students failed to catch up to the three young chimps, Matsuzawa said in an e-mail.

He thinks two factors gave his chimps the edge. For one thing, he believes human ancestors gave up much of this skill over evolutionary time to make room in the brain for gaining language abilities.

The other factor is the youth of Ayumu and his peers. The memory for images that's needed for the tests resembles a skill found in children, but which dissipates with age. In fact, the young chimps performed better than older chimps in the new study. (Ayumu's mom did even worse than the college students).

So the next logical step, Lonsdorf said, is to fix up Ayumu with some real competition on these tests: little kids.

AP

AP

Chan's margin over her main rival, Regina Ip, was higher than expected after opinion polls showed the gap narrowing in recent days.

"I think it shows that a lot of middle class people in Hong Kong still care about democracy, even though the economy is getting better, the stock market is rising, and the economy is more dependent on China," said Ma Ngok, associate professor at the Chinese University of Hong Kong.

"This is something that Beijing needs to think about."

Since 1997, however, the democratic camp's overall support rate of about 60 percent has slipped and some experts warn that it must rethink its single-issue approach to elections. Chan won about 54 percent of the vote.

"This is the time for the pan-democrats to have a thorough review," said James Sung of City University. "But I'm suspicious ... since this was a clear victory for Anson I'm afraid that the pan-democratic group will not look thoroughly at the changing political climate."

Despite losing, Ip's strong showing demonstrated once again, after the district council elections, that the pro-Beijing camp's election machine that backed her is formidable.

The city's constitution makes universal suffrage the ultimate aim of political reform, but is vague on the timing and direction. The British

themselves never pushed the idea until the dying days of colonial rule under Patten.

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Poll: Obama, Huckabee lead 2008 race in Iowa

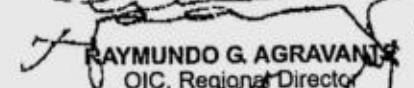
DES MOINES, IOWA—DEMOCRAT Barack Obama and Republican Mike Huckabee surged into narrow leads in Iowa in a poll released on Sunday, barely a month before the state holds the first contest in a shifting 2008 presidential race.

The poll by the Des Moines Register, the state's largest newspaper, showed Obama with a three-point edge over national front-runner Hillary Clinton in Iowa, 28 percent to 25 percent, and former North Carolina Sen. John Edwards third at 23 percent.

The new poll follows other recent surveys showing Obama, an Illinois senator, and Huckabee, the former governor of Arkansas, picking up steam in Iowa and nationally one month before Iowa's Jan. 3 contest kicks off the state-by-state battle to choose candidates for the November 2008 election. Reuters

NOTICE OF FILING OF APPLICATION/S FOR ALIEN EMPLOYMENT PERMIT/S (AEP/S)		
Notice is hereby given that the following companies/employers have filed with this Regional Office application/s for Alien Employment Permit/s:		
Name and address of Company/Employer	Name of Foreign National/Citizenship	Position
JP BIOFUELS CORPORATION 71-B St. Borromeo, South Triangle, Quezon City	Masaharu Kurahachi Japanese	President and Chairman of the Board
LUCKY DHILLON ENTERPRISES INC. B2 L1 Mercury St., Mapayapa Vill., Pulang Lupa I, Las Piñas City	Harvinder Kumar Indian	Assistant Marketing Manager
LUCKY DHILLON ENTERPRISES INC. B2 L1 Mercury St., Mapayapa Vill., Pulang Lupa I, Las Piñas City	Inderjit Kaur Malhi Indian	Assistant General Manager
SOGY NAWANSHAR TRADING CORP. 1503 Galvan St., Makati City	Sarabjit Singh Dhillon Indian	Sales Consultant
JGC CORPORATION MANILA ROHQ 7/F JGC Phils. Bldg., 2109 Prime St., Madrigal Business Park, Alabang, Muntinlupa City	Masanori Miyama Japanese	Instrument Supervisor
CEBU ERNBL IMPORT, INC. Unit 101 Joncor 2 Bldg., 1362 A. Mabini St., Ermita, Manila	Brian Lance Giles American	Managing Director
YEHAENG-SKETCH TOURS & TRAVEL INC. Rm. 402 Acre Bldg., 137 Malakas St., Diliman, Quezon City	Yanliang Zeng Chinese	Travel Consultant
YEHAENG-SKETCH TOURS & TRAVEL INC. Rm. 402 Acre Bldg., 137 Malakas St., Diliman, Quezon City	Yanliang Zeng Chinese	Travel Consultant
PURELINE GAZ CORP. 626 Congressional Ave. cor. Clarion Lily St., Bayah Toro, Quezon City	Yanghee Kim Korean	Supervisor
ATHENA PACIFIC CORPORATION Unit 1707 Cityland Herrera Tower, V.A. Rufino cor. Valero Sts., Salcedo Village, Makati City	Sung Keun Cho Korean	Chairman
ATHENA PACIFIC CORPORATION Unit 1707 Cityland Herrera Tower, V.A. Rufino cor. Valero Sts., Salcedo Village, Makati City	Dong Hee Lee Korean	Chief Operating Officer / General Manager
RJ TRAVEL AGENCY, INC. 23 Jasmine St., Mapayapa Vill. II, Don Antonio Hts., Quezon City	Meiyang Zhou Chinese	Travel Consultant
RJ TRAVEL AGENCY, INC. 23 Jasmine St., Mapayapa Vill. II, Don Antonio Hts., Quezon City	Guozhong Cai Chinese	Travel Consultant
SYKES ASIA INC. 26/F Robinsons Summit Center, 6783 Ayala Avenue, Makati City	Ji Yoon Kim Korean	Korean Client Support
CHINA CHAMPION GROUP PHILS. INT'L., INC. 501-A Dr. Jos Perez Ave., Las Piñas City	Shikun Wang Chinese	Merchandizing Supervisor II
SYKES ASIA INC. 26/F Robinsons Summit Center, 6783 Ayala Avenue, Makati City	Aeja Choi Korean	Korean Client Support
PLASTOP ASIA INC. 1038 Cristobal St., Ermita, Manila	Cheree Anne Weir New Zealand	Administration Manager

If you have any information/objection to the above mentioned application/s please communicate with the Regional Director.



RAYMUND G. AGRAVANTE
OIC, Regional Director



CHAN (right) and her husband Archie (left) hug in Hong Kong on Dec. 3.

AFP

Reuters

The WORLD

Editor Luverne B. Gueco

Putin wins landslide; foes decry poll

MOSCOW—PRESIDENT VLADIMIR PUTIN'S party won a landslide victory in a parliamentary election, official results showed on Monday, giving him a mandate to shape Russia's political landscape after his second term ends next year.

But opposition parties and independent election monitors cried foul. They said biased media coverage during the campaign, overt government support for Putin's United Russia party and numerous irregularities during voting had skewed the outcome.

The Central Electoral Commission said that with almost all votes counted, United Russia had won 64.1 percent of votes, nearly six times as many as the nearest challenger, the Communist party. Two smaller pro-Kremlin groupings took another 16 percent of the vote and pro-Western parties won no seats.

The Kremlin hailed the vote as a strong personal endorsement for Putin, who campaigned vigorously for United Russia.

Financial market analysts said the result would bolster stability and encourage investment.

"Russian voters spoke in favor of United Russia, thus supporting President Putin's course, and spoke in favor of it being continued after the current president's second term ends," said Dmitry Peskov, a Kremlin spokesperson.

What Putin will do after his second term ends next May remains unclear. Some observers say he could seek a third term as presi-

dent, although he has said he will not change the constitution to pave the way for this.

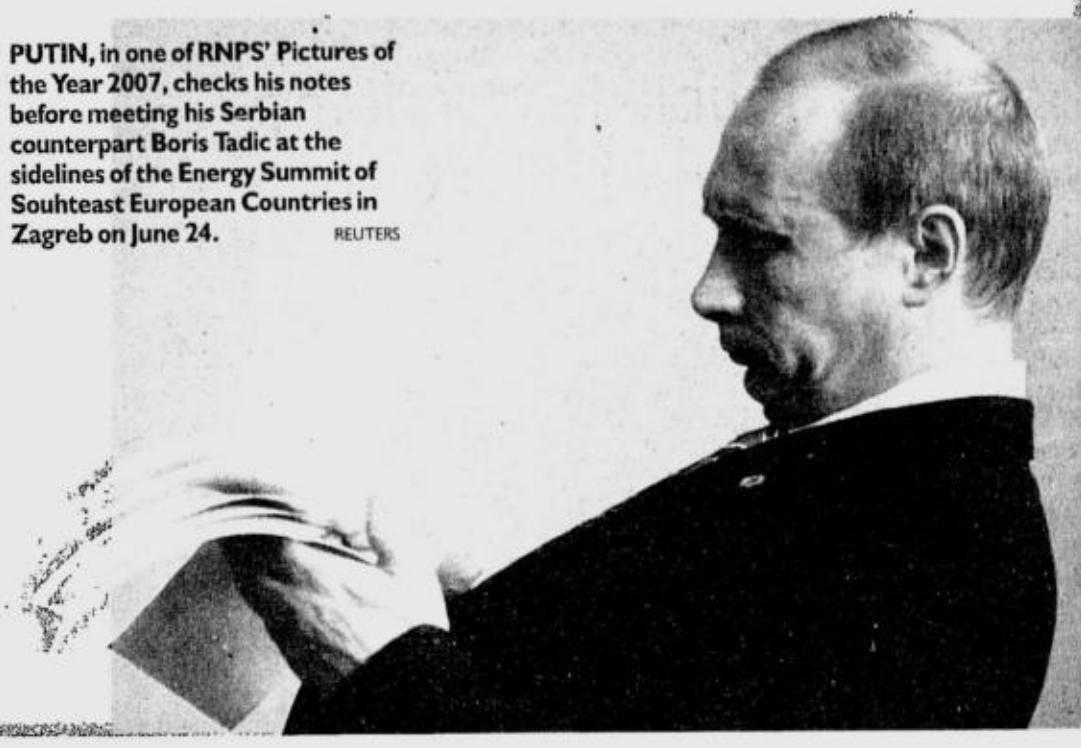
Projections by the Electoral Commission showed pro-Kremlin parties would win about 393 of the 450 seats in the next State Duma, the lower house of parliament. That would be more than enough to allow them to change the constitution if they wished.

Opinion polls show Putin, a 55-year-old former KGB agent, is extremely popular after eight years of oil-fueled economic growth. Voters credit him with restoring stability and national pride and like his tough nationalism and criticism of the West.

The Communists, who won 11.6 percent of votes, said they would challenge the result in the courts. In a first reaction from abroad, the United States urged Russia to investigate the numerous reports of vote-rigging. *Reuters*

PUTIN, in one of RNPS' Pictures of the Year 2007, checks his notes before meeting his Serbian counterpart Boris Tadic at the sidelines of the Energy Summit of Southeast European Countries in Zagreb on June 24.

REUTERS



Venezuela's Chavez loses 'president-for-life' vote

CARACAS—PRESIDENT HUGO Chavez crashed to an unprecedented vote defeat on Monday as Venezuelans rejected his bid to run for reelection indefinitely and accelerate his socialist revolution in the Opec nation.

In a fiercely contested referendum on Sunday, voters said "No" to a raft of reforms that would have scrapped term limits on Chavez's rule, boosted his powers to expropriate private property and allowed him to censor the media in emergencies.

The "No" camp won with about 51 percent of the vote, beating the anti-US president who scored around 49-percent support, election officials said early on Monday.



CHAVEZ

Celebrations immediately erupted throughout Caracas with caravans of opposition activists cheering, honking horns and waving flags out of car windows. Many said Venezuela had narrowly escaped the imposition of authoritarian rule.

"The reform would have made some frightening changes in our country," said an ecstatic Astrid Badell, 18, pulling a plastic green whistle from her mouth to talk. "It would have practically been a copy of the Cuban constitution, and that would have been a big step backward."

While Chavez remains powerful and popular, it was his first ballot-box loss since he first swept into office nine years ago after failing to

seize power in a 1992 military coup.

The self-styled revolutionary and close ally of Cuba conceded defeat but said he would "continue in the battle to build socialism."

Chavez also said the reform proposals remained "alive," suggesting he might try to push them through later on.

"This is not a defeat. This is another 'for now,'" Chavez said, repeating a famous quote when as a red-bereted paratrooper he acknowledged his coup attempt had failed.

He did not appear despondent at his presidential palace, where he told supporters not to be sad and wished all Venezuelans a "merry Christmas."

"I have listened to the voice of the people and I will always be listening to it," he said.

Students, rights and business groups, opposition parties, the Roman Catholic Church, former political allies and even his usually loyal ex-wife all lined up against Chavez ahead of the referendum vote.

They accused him of pushing the constitutional reforms to set up a dictatorship.

"Venezuela said 'No' to socialism, Venezuela said 'Yes' to democracy," said Leopoldo Lopez, the popular mayor of a Caracas district.

The United States says Chavez is a dangerous influence in Latin America. *Reuters*

Heavy snow, ice hit US, Canada; at least 4 dead

CHICAGO—THE FIRST MASSIVE winter storm of the season made its way toward the northeastern United States and Canada after lashing the Midwest, leaving at least four dead in car accidents and disrupting air travel, officials and media reported Sunday.

Heavy snow and freezing rain forced the cancellation of numerous flights in Wisconsin, Iowa and Illinois and some campaign events in Iowa, where presidential candidates will face their first test in a month for the 2008 White House race.

At Des Moines airport in Iowa, a United Airlines regional jet bound for Chicago slid off an icy taxiway on Saturday morning, closing the airport for more than six hours, airport and airline officials said. No one was seriously injured.

In Wisconsin a 37-year-old man died when a jeep hit a truck near DeForest as other cars ahead were slowing down for another truck that had tipped over on a highway, the Wisconsin State Journal reported on Sunday.

Two people died in separate crashes in the same Juneau County area on Interstate 90-94, the paper said.

In Indiana, a member of the Purdue University ice hockey club team was killed and seven teammates were injured when their van crashed Saturday in freezing rain, the Indianapolis Star reported.

The crash occurred 27 km south of West Lafayette, home to the university, when one of the team's vans swerved out of control on a two-lane highway and rolled over.

Purdue said 20 hockey players, two coaches and a manager were headed to Danville, Illinois for a late-afternoon game.

In Madison, Wisconsin, city officials declared a snow emergency through at least 7 a.m. on Monday.

Snow flurries on Saturday were followed by freezing rain later in the day in Midwestern states and the National Weather Service said cold air moving into the region could produce sleet and more freezing rain in parts of Iowa and Illinois. Light snow was forecast for parts of Wisconsin.

As the storm moved toward the northeast, the National Weather Service predicted heavy snow would hit the state of New York and across New England. Freezing rain and sleet was expected across much of New York, Pennsylvania, and northwest New Jersey.

The Federal Aviation Authority reported Sunday afternoon delays averaging one hour to more than two hours at major east coast airports from Philadelphia to New York.

New York City deployed all of its salt trucks to try and keep roadways from getting slick as the first snowfall of the season was expected to turn icy and possibly treacherous. *AFP*

Mummified dinosaur had scales, probably could outrun T. rex

WASHINGTON—ONE OF THE most complete dinosaur mummies ever found is revealing secrets locked away for millions of years, bringing researchers as close as they will ever get to touching a live dinosaur.

The fossilized duckbilled hadrosaur is so well-preserved that scientists have been able to calculate its muscle mass and learn that it was more muscular than thought, probably giving it the ability to outrun predators such as a tyrannosaurus rex.

While they call it a mummy, the dinosaur is not really preserved like King Tut was. The dinosaur body has been fossilized into stone. Unlike the collections of bones found in museums, this hadrosaur came complete with skin, ligaments, tendons and possibly some internal organs, according to researchers.

The study is not yet complete, but scientists have concluded that hadrosaurs were bigger—3.18 metric tons and up to 12.19 meters long—and stronger than had been known,

were quick and flexible and had skin with scales that may have been striped.

"Oh, the skin is wonderful," paleontologist Phillip Manning of Manchester University in England rhapsodized, admitting to a "glazed look in my eye."

"It's unbelievable when you look at it for the first time," he said in a telephone interview.

"There is depth and structure to the skin. The level of detail expressed in the skin is just breathtaking."

Manning said there is a pat-

tern of banding to the larger and smaller scales on the skin. Because it has been fossilized researchers do not know the skin color.

Looking at it in monochrome shows a striped pattern.

He notes that in modern reptiles, such a pattern is often associated with color change.

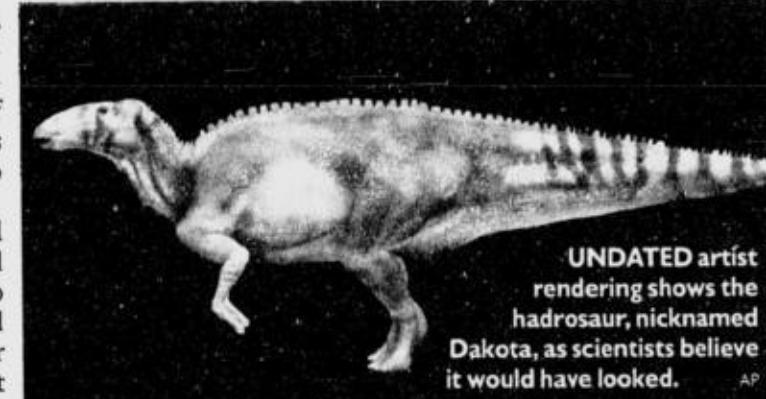
The fossil was found in 1999 in the U.S. state of North Dakota and now is nicknamed "Dakota." It is being analyzed in the world's largest CT scanner, operated by the Boeing Co. *AP*

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Looking at it in monochrome shows a striped pattern.

He notes that in modern reptiles, such a pattern is often associated with color change.

The fossil was found in 1999 in the U.S. state of North Dakota and now is nicknamed "Dakota." It is being analyzed in the world's largest CT scanner, operated by the Boeing Co. *AP*



UNDATED artist rendering shows the hadrosaur, nicknamed Dakota, as scientists believe it would have looked. *AP*

Naples 'miracle chair' draws childless couples

NAPLES—AN ORDINARY OLD armchair under a worn blanket in a three-room flat in Naples draws thousands of hopeful pilgrims. Pasted all over the walls around it are birth announcements: pink for girls, blue for boys.

Childless women from all over the world flock to the "miracle" chair—close to Speranzella street whose name suggests hope—in the picturesque Spanish Quarter of Naples.

There they ask Saint Mary Frances of the Five Wounds of Jesus for a miracle.

With her "miracles" reported on Weblogs, the saint's shrine has become a main stop on the religious tourism circuit in Naples, a city which in Italy is almost as well known for veneration of saints as for the Camorra crime

syndicate.

"The saint is waiting for you," Sister Elisa, an energetic 65-year-old nun from the order that has guarded the shrine for two centuries, tells hundreds of men and women of all ages gathered for morning prayer at the nearby church.

After the Mass, worshippers are led up a steep staircase and along a narrow corridor into the flat where the saint, born Anna Maria Rosa Nicoletta Gallo, spent half her life in chastity and mystical suffering until her death in 1791 at the age of 76.

Hair shirts and a whip hanging from the walls remind pilgrims of the grim "voluntary penance" the saint adopted after joining the strict order of Saint Peter of Alcantara.

As the religious name she took suggests, she was believed to carry the "stigmata" or wounds of Jesus. She was the first woman saint born in Naples, but there is no hint in her life story as to why her help is sought by childless women in particular.

"Are you married?" Sister Maria Giuliana whispers to a young woman sitting on the armchair before touching the visitor's breast and belly with a "monstrance" or reliquary containing a vertebra and a lock of hair from the saint.

As the nun prays, the group waits in silence.

"I am here to pray for everybody's sake, not only for myself," one young woman, who declined to give her name, whispered to the nun in the hushed room.

Later, Sister Elisa shows a picture of a 5-month-old baby and a letter from his parents.

"We came to Naples to visit Saint Mary Frances on January 21, 2006," reads the letter signed by Dejan and Jasmina Bogdanovic, a Serbian couple living in Germany.

Evidence of Saint Mary Frances' miracles is anecdotal, but the groundswell of devotion for the "saint of the family"—who escaped a forced marriage and an oppressive father—has spread by word of mouth and, more recently, through blogs like [news.wordpress.com](http://www.news.wordpress.com).

Roman Catholic Italy is rich in relics, which may be all or part of a saint's body or a belonging such as clothing. The most famous example in Naples is a glass phial

believed to contain the dried blood of Saint Gennaro, the patron saint of Naples who was beheaded by pagan Romans in 305 A.D.

Each year pilgrims crowd the cathedral to witness the

"miracle" of Saint Gennaro's blood, whose liquefaction is seen as a good omen for the city. On his feast day, a statue of Saint Mary Frances is carried behind his沿 the streets of Naples.

But nobody appears to know exactly how many relics have been preserved over the centuries in the churches of Naples.

"It is not even possible to say how many churches there are in Naples," Don Luigi Merluzzo, head of public relations at the Archdiocese of Naples, said. *Reuters*

As the storm moved toward the northeast, the National Weather Service predicted heavy snow would hit the state of New York and across New England. Freezing rain and sleet was expected across much of New York, Pennsylvania, and northwest New Jersey.

The Federal Aviation Authority reported Sunday afternoon delays averaging one hour to more than two hours at major east coast airports from Philadelphia to New York.

New York City deployed all of its salt trucks to try and keep roadways from getting slick as the first snowfall of the season was expected to turn icy and possibly treacherous. *AFP*



WHAT'S INSIDE

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SPORTS

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■ Celts dump
James-less
Cavs; Spurs
rip Blazers

/A24



RP settles for 3rd silver in skeet

Golden double for Thailand as victory eludes Pinoy shooters

By Musong R. Castillo

BANGKOK—THERE REALLY IS NO PLACE LIKE HOME—FOR THE TRIUMPHANT THAIS AND DETHRONED FILIPINO SKEET CHAMPION BRIAN ROSARIO.

Thailand turned in its version of a golden double kill in the skeet competitions of the 24th Southeast Asian Games on Monday, using its astute familiarity of the range even as Rosario's bid ended up in shambles.

But the Filipinos managed to hold it together in the final 50 targets of classification to bag the team silver, which team member Pablito Bernardo said "was not bad considering the conditions we were in."

Team Philippines, who won the gold in 2005 in Manila, finished with a 333 total after 125 shots, with Rosario shooting 114, Bernardo 111 and Gabriel Tong 110.

The Filipinos' tally was nine shots off the winning mark registered by the Thais, who broke away from a tie at 207 points at the start of the day with a performance to remember.

The Thais, with the eagle-eyed Jira-

nunt Hathaichukiat scoring a 24 and a 23, and Krisada Varadharmpainich shooting 22 and 22 in the last two stages, broke away from the Filipinos to win the hosts' 13th gold in the six-day-old biennial Games.

Hathaichukiat went on to bag the individual gold with a 138 tally, with Varadhardmapinich checking in second two shots behind.

Phased Pitipoom, the third member of the Thai team, finished with 23 and 21 points for 111, good enough for a shoot-off for the finals where he and two other foreigners ousted Bernardo to make the final six-man squad.

Singapore bagged the team bronze with a 328 total, with David Chan and Huan Lin Eugene Chien shooting 111 points each and Lee Yee adding 196.

Rosario, after a perfect 25 to open the RP campaign at the Thailand Target and Clay Ranges here on Sunday,

started the day with 69 points, tied for third with his teammates. He had a 24 in the fourth round only to flounder with a 20 in the last to go into the finals in third spot.

But he lost his touch in the medal round, downing only 18 birds as the worst performer in the crucial stage.

"Nawalan na ako ng gana (I lost my desire to win)," Rosario, the 25-year-old business studies graduate who won the gold in Manila two years ago, was overheard telling teammates after that dismal effort in the finals.

Rosario, the only Filipino to make the finals, begged off from granting interviews during practice Saturday and after the first 75 shots.

But it was clear that the Thais were in a class by themselves on the final day.

The Philippines scooped up three silvers in shooting, the other two coming from the trap team of Jethro Dionisio, Carlos Carag and the pocket-sized Eric Ang and rookie Jacqueline de Guzman, who was a surprise runner-up in women's skeet on Sunday.

"We (team) had a strong feeling that they (Thais) prepared hard for us," Bernardo, a 56-year-old owner of a chain of computer stores said. "They were very careful in choosing the range. They picked the one where they had the most advantage in."

"That's the beauty of being the host country. We did it to them (in Manila) and they did it to us here."

The range inside the mammoth Rajamangala National Stadium has a background filled with trees which camouflaged the "birds."

TOP Filipino skeet shooter Bryan Rosario loses his touch in the medal round. (Medal tally on A23)

EGAY MONTANA, CONTRIBUTOR



THE RP women's team must now hope for a close result against Vietnam. AUGUST DELA CRUZ

Lowly Laos holds off Filipino lady booters

By Musong R. Castillo

NAKHON RATCHASIMA—THE PHILIPPINE women's team blew a 2-1 lead with just over 20 minutes left Monday and was held to a 2-2 tie by lowly Laos at the start of women's football in the 24th Southeast Asian Games at the Tumbon Muenapug Stadium here.

Laos, a relative newcomer to the Games, knocked in a goal in the 73rd minute courtesy of striker Phaivanh Souphavahn that forged the tie, giving both the Laotians and the favored Filipinos just a point each.

The Filipinos, who missed making the semifinals in Bacolod two years ago by just a goal, rallied from a 0-1 first-half deficit, scoring twice in a five-minute span through Patrice Impelido and Edna Agravante starting in the 63rd minute.

And it looked like it would be a stroll from there for RP until that game-tying goal, which now put the country in a must-win

situation over Vietnam, the defending champion which massacred the nationals, 1-9, in the AFC earlier this year.

Ting Sengmany shoved Laos ahead in the 17th minute with a lucky stab that eluded Filipino keeper Nadia Galang.

There are only two groups made up of three teams each. Only the top two will advance to the Final Four, and the Philippines must, at all cost, try to avoid losing big to the Vietnamese to stay alive.

In Group B action, Thailand tore Malaysia to shred, 6-0 on Sunday, for the early lead.

Laos will clash with the Vietnamese Saturday and in the event of a tie, the goal difference (goals for minus goals against) will be used to break it.

The Philippines-Vietnam match is scheduled at 3:15 tomorrow.

The RP women's team was sent here in lieu of the men because of better medal prospects, but the tie Monday certainly hurt that chance.

Barbosa stuns Iranian GM, joins So, Laylo on top of leader board

By Roy Luarca

NATIONAL MASTER OLIVER BARBOSA stunned Iranian Grandmaster Ehsan Ghaem Maghami Sunday night to cap the Filipinos' strong third round showing in the third Pros-

BARBOSA/A23

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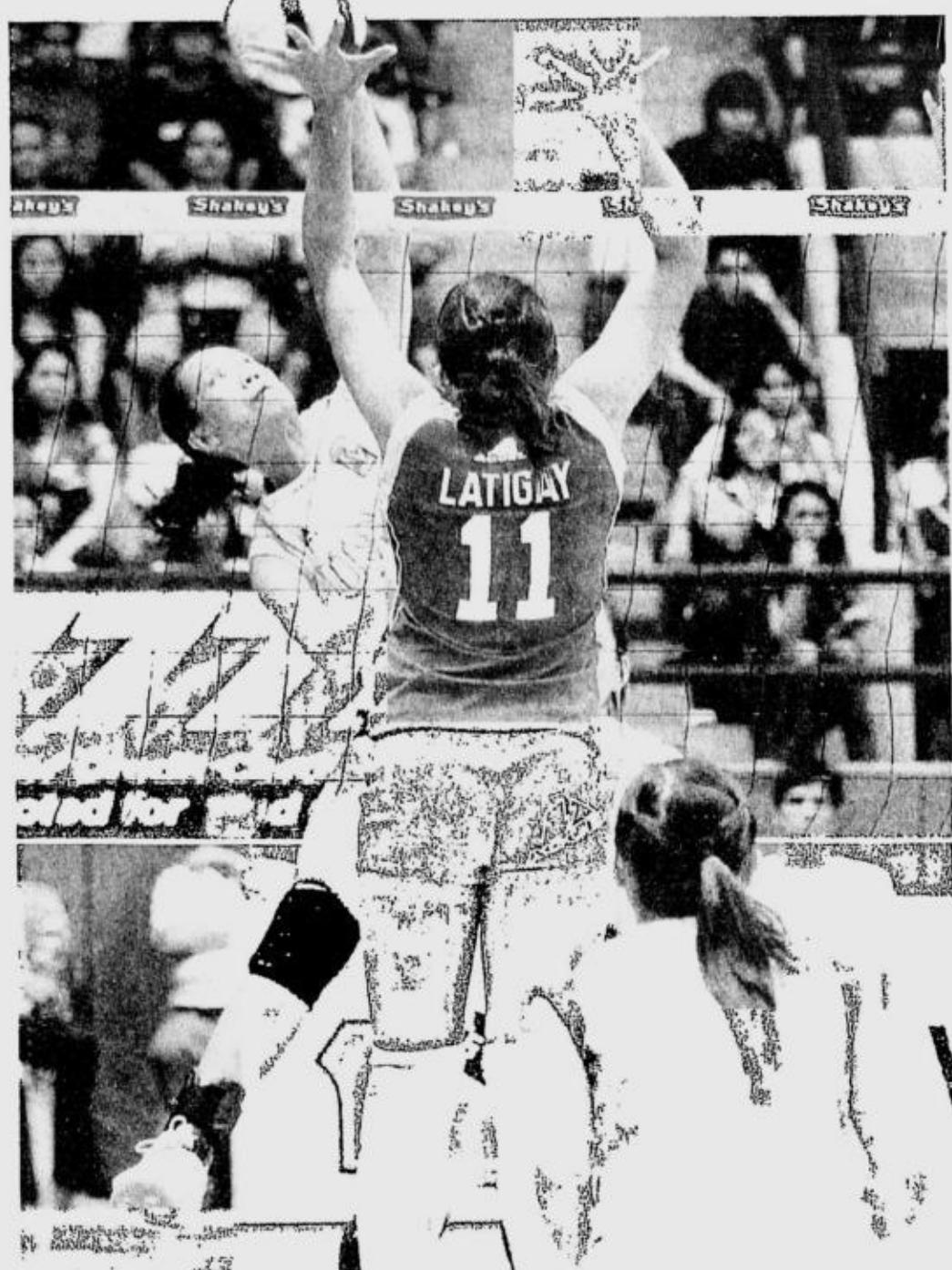
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UST'S Venus Bernal goes for the kill against Laurene Anne Latigay in Sunday's game. AUGUST DELA CRUZ

BOWLING GAMBLE?

PBC's Hontiveros calls Tee, Gatchalian 'uncoachable'

By Marc Anthony Reyes

THIS IS A GAMBLE WE HAVE TO TAKE.

That, in a nutshell, was how Philippine Bowling Congress president Steve Hontiveros yesterday described their stunning, if controversial, last-minute decision to replace two Southeast Asian Games defending champions with reserve bowlers.

Hontiveros said the PBC board convened yesterday to affirm the decision by national coaches Caloy De Leon, Jean Canaleta and Madoka Amano to drop defending men's Masters champion Markwin Tee and Joonee Gatchalian, who ruled the men's doubles in 2005 with CJ Suarez, for being "uncoachable."

Their slots were taken up by reserves Benshir Layoso and Tyrone Ongpauco.

"What can we do? Kaya naman mabokya na naman tayo kagaya nung Asian Games. (Lest we want to bomb out like we did in the Asian Games)," said Hontiveros.

"They (Tee and Gatchalian) are good but we must have the correct attitude also."

"We can't compete like this. We have to take the risk. That's what I told the coaches."

Hontiveros said the coaches had signed a memorandum that they would resign if the Philippines failed to get at least a gold and a silver in the Thailand SEAG. The country bagged four gold and six silver medals in the 2005 SEAG.

The team is leaving on Dec. 6 with the new recruits in tow and reigning World Masters champion Biboy Rivera, who was called in from sick bay.

"I was given the go-signal by the doctors," said Rivera, who nevertheless confided that he is still in the process of "recovering from my (knee) injury."

Bowling Hall of Famer Bong Coo, the PBC secretary general, said the last-minute replacement of Tee and Gatchalian was the decision of the coaches. She also vouched for the preparedness of Ongpauco and



OUT: Markwin Tee



HONTIVEROS: Gamble

Layoso.

"They have been training with the team all along," she said. "They are not entirely new to the team."

"We are not biased against anybody," said Hontiveros. "In fact, I made Markwin the flag bearer during the Asian indoors. This is not just a game. It's the pride of the country that's at stake here."

Tee topped the national team scoring session, while Gatchalian finished fifth during the trials last August. Tee also won the silver in the singles, while Gatchalian was part of the silver-winning team of five in 2005.

Fernando reinstated, cleared for Fil-Am stint

By Jong Arcano



FERNANDO

BAGUIO—ANTHONY FERNANDO'S reinstatement as an amateur yesterday finally cleared the way for his stint in the Fil-Am wars here but Manila Southwoods is ready for the worst-case scenario of playing without him.

Fernando, the reigning Philippine amateur champion, joined Southwoods in practice here yesterday and Sunday.

But the decision of the National Golf Association of the Philippines to rescind its decision to strip Fernando of his amateur status—for appearing in what it perceived as an advertisement in a golf magazine—also gave him back his slot in the national team.

He might leave the city in a huff for next week's Thailand Southeast Asian Games.

"For us, it's country first," said Chucho Martinez of Southwoods, which will challenge Club Marinduque/Calatagan's bid for a fourth straight title in the Fil Championship division.

NGAP director Caloy Coscolluela told the INQUIRER yesterday that they made the decision to reinstate Tony after reviewing the explanations of both Fernando and PacSports, which placed the ad in INQUIRER GOLF.

"We're actually fielding Tony in the SEA Games and it will be up to him if he will still play in the Fil-Am," Coscolluela said.

Meanwhile, Fil-Am co-chair Anthony de Leon said that the number of registered play-

ers has ballooned to a record 1,202.

As action fired off in the earlier flights, Watercraft Ventures and Guam Kool Swingers took the lead in Fil B and C flights.

Noly Carino toured the par 61 BCC course with a seven-over 68 for 29 points to pace the Guamanians. Lito Garcia had a 28, while Willy Valencia and Victor Ovales added 25 and 22, respectively, as the team pooled 104.

Team L.A. drew a 28 from Ernie Arambulo as the squad scrambled for 96 points and second spot, while Circa 16 Golf Club and Team Surigao I turned in 89 points to tie for third.

At Camp John Hay, Rural Bankers opened with 80 points to lead Am B while Mamala Bay totaled 74 to pace Am C.

What sparked RP mania in basketball

You may forget but let me tell you this: someone in some future time will think of us—Sappho

SEVERAL WEEKS AGO, READER ISABEL FILOMENO of Cagayan de Oro City wrote this corner requesting for a list of Filipino basketball Olympians from 1936 up to the time we last played in the Olympic Games.

In his letter Mr. Filomeno said, "I'm sure many of your readers would be interested to know them."

I agree. There is question that basketball is the Filipinos' national pastime.

In my view, what sparked the country's mania in basketball was the Philippine team's fifth-place in the Berlin Olympic Games in 1936, when the dash-and-dribble sport made its debut as an Olympic event. The game's inventor, Dr. James A. Naismith, opened the tournament which drew a motley field of 12 countries: The

CLEAN LIVING

Manolo R. Inigo



games were played outdoors.

The RP team, captained by Ambrosio Padilla, who later became a senator and president of the defunct Philippine Amateur Athletic Federation (forerunner of the Philippine Olympic Committee), won four of its five games, losing only to the United States, 56-23. The US won the gold medal—as expected—but the Philippines was ranked fifth while Mexico, which was beaten by the Filipinos, 32-30, copped the bronze, a faulty ruling which had been amended since then by the sport's ruling body.

However, that fifth-place finish was the best performance by any Philip-

pine basketball team in the Olympics.

Coached by battle-tested Dionisio "Chito" Calvo, the members of the powerhouse RP team—aside from Padilla—were Jacinto Ciria Cruz, Charles Borck, Primitivo Martinez, Franco Marquicias, Jesus Marzan, Amador Obordo, Bibiano Quano, John Worrell and Fortunato Yambao. The alternates were Miguel Pardo and Antonio Carillo.

After beating Mexico, the Philippines defeated Estonia, 39-22, before losing to the US. The Philippines wrapped up its assignments by whipping Italy, 32-14, and Uruguay, 33-23.

The rest of our participation in the Olympic Games:

1948 LONDON—Lauro Mumar, Manolet Araneta Jr., Ramon Campos Jr., Andy dela Cruz, Eduardo Decena, Fely Fajardo, captain; and his brother Gabby Fajardo, Edgardo "Ding" Fulgencio, Antonio Martinez and Francisco Vestil. The coach was again Chito Calvo, with Tito Eduque and Luis

Gavierres as alternates.

The Philippines finished 12th, with the US bagging the gold anew.

Results in London: RP d. Iraq, 102-30; RP d. Korea, 35-33; RP lost to Chile, 39-68; RP d. China, 51-32; RP lost to Belgium, 35-37; RP d. Argentina, 45-43; RP lost to Peru, 29-40; RP lost to Belgium, 34-38.

1952 HELSINKI—Carlos Loyzaga, Ramon Campos Jr., Antonio Genato, Rafael Hechanova, Eduardo Lim, Florentino Bautista, Antonio Martinez, captain; Jose Gochangco, Ponciano Saldaña, Meliton Santos, Antonio Tantay and Mariano Tolentino. Fely Fajardo was the team coach while no alternate was named.

The Philippines placed ninth, with the US winning its third title in a row.

Results in Helsinki: RP d. Israel, 57-47; RP d. Hungary, 48-35; RP lost to Argentina, 59-85; RP lost to Brazil, 52-71; RP d. Canada, 81-65. (To be continued)

Shakey's V-League title decider today

By Romina S. Austria

UNIVERSITY OF SANTO TOMAS COACH AUGUSTO SANTAMARIA SAID winning comes easy for his Tigresses when they receive the ball well and play inspired defense.

"When we are able to execute those things, it's hard to beat us," said Santamaria.

Whether the Tigresses can play their usual relaxed game under the grinding pressure of a winner-take-all match against the San Sebastian Lady Stags will be known today.

This time, UST and San Sebastian clash at 5 p.m. at The Arena to decide the 2007 Shakey's V-League women's volleyball second conference championship.

Momentum had clearly shifted in UST's favor following its 25-16, 25-15, 25-21 win over San Sebastian Sunday to force a decider in the best-of-three title series.

San Sebastian won the series opener, 25-16, 25-19, 17-25, 23-25, 15-13, Friday to move on the verge of its first V-League crown after finishing second behind La Salle last year and to UST in the first conference.

But the Lady Stags were completely dominated last Sunday. Thai

import Jaroensi Bualee, averaging 22 points per game, made only 17, a testament to the Tigress' defense.

Still, Santamaria said "anything can happen. I don't believe in momentum."

Guest player Suzanne Roces topscored with 16 points and along with Mary Jean Balse, had four blocks each and five service points between them during Game Two.

San Sebastian coach Roger Gorayeb said they should match UST's defense and good reception.

"We have to play tougher net defense," said Gorayeb.

UST was also left out of the league individual awards which used statistics as basis. Santamaria said his players were not at all affected.

"We play as a team so there's really no single dominant player," said Santamaria. "We play well even without awards."

In the battle for third place, also Sunday, Ateneo posted its highest finish ever by sweeping Adamson

University, 25-23, 25-22, 25-23, in their best-of-three clash.

The Lady Eagles, who also won Game One, 14-25, 25-21, 25-19, 25-19, placed fourth in the 2005 first conference.

Most Valuable Player and guest Thai player Lithawat Kesinee was her usual dominant self, firing a game-high 29 points for Ateneo. The two-time Southeast Asian Games campaigner also received the Best Scorer and Best Blocker awards.

Despite the loss, the Lady Falcons improved on their sixth-place performance in the first conference.

Neriza Bautista topscored for Adamson with 19 points, all from attacks, while Angela Benting, Rissa Laguilles, Michelle Segodine, Jacqueline So and Janet Serafica combined for 28 points.

The other individual awardees were Bualee (Best Attacker), La Salle's Jacqueline Alarca (Best Setter), Adamson's Lizzie Ann Gata (Best Digger) and San Sebastian's Charisse Ancheta (Best Setter) and Margarita Pepito (Best Receiver).

Bualee was named Best Attacker while teammates Mary Jane Pepito and Charisse Ancheta took the Best Receiver and Setter plums, respectively.

SPORTSWATCH

Pascua dad writes 30

FORMER MOVIE WRITER-DIRECTOR ANTONIO B. PASCUA passed away Sunday after a lingering illness. He was 73. He is survived by son, sportswriter Ibarra Pascua and daughter Angela Revilla and children-in-law Shirley and Gener and grandchildren Illuminada, Sabrina, Lucas and Elizabeth Pascua and Nerwendell and Arnell Revilla. His body lies in state at La Bien Memorial Chapel, Malibki, Bacoor, Cavite. Cremation is set on Wednesday.

UGBA 9-stag tilt resumes

THE SEMIFINAL ROUND OF THE UGBA Heritage Cup National 9-Stag Derby resumes at 2 p.m. today at the San Juan Coliseum.

The maiden offering of the newly formed United Gamecock Breeders Association drew 632 entries. UGBA president Rene Diaz said the winners will receive a guaranteed prize of P10 million.

Two participants lead the field with six wins each—Charlie Yu and Jimmy Canda, both of Salukan Breeders Group of Davao.

Big prizes up in 'Salukan'

WITH JUST A WEEK TO GO BEFORE THE big showdown, Makati Coliseum's "Pamaskong Salukan" 6-cock derby has attracted more than 300 confirmed entries.

Slated Dec. 10, 12, 17, 19, 22, 26 and 29, the cockfest dangles P3 million cash, a Toyota Innova and a passenger jeep.

Hosts Lito Orillaza, Rudy Salud and William Co of WJT Sports and Amusement Corp. said this annual event opens the cock season of Makati Coliseum for 2007-08.

The champion handler will win P150,000 and the top gaffer P50,000.

Roligon derby Round 2 on

SEVENTY MATCHES ARE ON TAP IN THE second round of the "2M Weder Weder Lang" 5-cock derby starting at 4 p.m. at Roligon Mega Cockpit in Parañaque City.

The crowd-drawing cock season opener fired off last Saturday with eight participants scoring two wins each—Sonny Manotoc (SM 1), Cesar Pedraja (CP Fortuner), Pol Derpo (Mikaela), Louie Alba (Dragon RM), Muling Dorado (Bayo Lente), Buddy Robregado (Katrina), James Uy (Lista Na) and D. Barredo (RB Diamond Cut).

Hosts Rolly Ligon and the Super Ninja group have staked a guaranteed prize of P2 million. Entry fee is P8,800.

Race 1—(Tri)—Tippytoe (3), Graceful (5), Life is Delicious (1)

Race 2—(Pen)—Tippitytoe (3), Graceful (5), Life is Delicious (1)

Race 3—(Penta/Or/Tri)—Sir Barbaro (6), Conquistadorsdream (5), Kang Kang (4), Priyanka (8), Mr. Godfather (2)

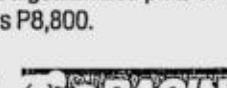
Race 4—(Super 6/Or/Tri)—Speed Admiral (1), Carmelita (10), King's Treasure (2), Writenindstars (8), Yapee Yoyoh (7), Air D'Truth (9)

Race 5—(Penta/Or/Tri)—Deep Pockets (7), She Boom (3), Queen of Gals (8), Astimogesby (2), Premiere Act (5)

Race 6—(Super Six/Or/Tri)—Given (9), Tonic Water (8), King Aljun (3), House of Riches (11), Ista Clipper (10), Amazing Pace (2)

Race 7—(Or/Tri)—Galant Warrior (6), Grand Fiesta (1), Sweet Talk (2), Zaniga (4)

Race 8—(Super 6/Or/Tri)—Gold Collar (2), Look Who's Playing (1), Sea of Galilee (9), Ride The Lightning (4), Seeing Red (12), Heart of the Wind (10)



BY TOP CHOICE



THE NATIONAL men's basketball team, powered by GNC sports nutrition, is ready for action in Thailand.

Thai No. 2 wary of Mamiit; skeet, trap different animals

By Musong R. Castillo

BANGKOK—CECIL MAMIIT HAS A built-in advantage when he comes to the 24th Southeast Asian Games—fear.

Danai Udomchok, the losing finalist in Manila two years ago, hopes that the luck of the draw will keep him out of the way of the stocky and comical Fil-American early for the best chance to win the singles gold medal.

In an article published in the broadsheet The Nation, Udomchok, the Thai No. 2 behind the illustrious Paradorn Srichapan, is also hoping for a payback against the Fil-Am, and the best way to get that would be in the singles finals.

The entire Thailand Lawn Tennis Association is also hoping to dismantle the men's team made up of Mamiit and fellow Fil-American Eric Taino and to unseat the Filipinos in the mixed doubles event.

Skeet and trap, two shotgun

24th SOUTHEAST ASIAN GAMES

	G	S	B
Thailand	14	16	6
Singapore	8	6	6
Vietnam	7	3	11
Malaysia	2	3	5
Myanmar	2	2	1
Philippines	0	3	1
Indonesia	0	0	2
Laos	0	0	0
Brunel	0	0	0
Cambodia	0	0	0
Timor Leste	0	0	0

shooting events that are played outdoors, have two very distinct characteristics that are not readily distinguishable unless explained by experts.

Though both events shoot down "birds," the targets in trap move away from the shooters and are released toward random directions. Each trap shooter also has a maximum of two shots to down a target.

In skeet, targets are flown in directions that cross the shooter's line of sight. The twist: skeet shoot-

ers have just one shot per "bird" and their guns have to be down before the targets are released.

How impressive is the Thai women's skeet team and the government's program?

Thailand put a young lady, T. Imprasersuk, as a guest player in the qualifying stage Sunday. She would have been in second place going into the medal round, behind another Thai and the Philippines Jacqueline de Guzman.

Imprasersuk, who can't be more than 16 years old, was so good that she shot 23 and 24 points in her first 50 targets to finish with 66 in the qualifying. That would have been just seven points behind topnotcher Sutija Jiewchaloemmit and two ahead of De Guzman.

So proud were her parents that she got a very warm hug after her stint, and we can be sure that the Thailand shooting association will be embracing her more in the future.

Officials warn RP five: Expect 'hostile' calls

First wave of SEAG bets off today

By Jasmine W. Payo
and Ernesto A. Gonzales

SPORTS OFFICIALS LED BY PHILIPPINE Olympic Committee president Jose "Peping" Cojuangco yesterday cautioned the men and women's national basketball squads to expect unfavorable calls in the Southeast Asian Games basketball competition.

"Expect untoward officiating, but we should not lose our heads," said Cojuangco in yesterday's send-off rites in Libis, Quezon City. "Don't let the officiating bother you. There will be unusual calls just to distract you, but just keep on playing."

The Harbour-RP team will leave for Nakhon Ratchasima in Thailand today, while the women's squad will depart tomorrow.

Also leaving with the first big wave of SEAG departures today are the national bets in swimming (11), billiards and snooker (16), boxing (24), gymnastics (5), lawn tennis (11), beach volleyball (12), weightlifting (17), futsal (16) and squash (3).

The lady cagers leave with a 139-man group to be headed by Philippine Sports Commission chair William "Butch" Ramirez. Joining them are the athletes from archery (17), baseball (17), athletics (51), wrestling (13), petanque (9) and judo (5).

Another big batch of 155 athletes and officials from badminton, cycling, bowling, dance sports, fencing, golf, muay, softball, triathlon

and weightlifting will leave on Dec. 6.

The rest of the RP delegation of 591 athletes and 200 officials will be leaving from Dec. 7 up to Dec. 10.

"Avoid technical fouls," said PBA officer-in-charge Sonny Barrios, citing one such call that helped doom the all-pro RP team in a key game during Fiba Asia Championship last July in Tokushima, Japan.

"When you play for the country, take no prisoners. Go for the kill from minute one to the end."

Coach Junel Baculi said his wards are up to the challenge. The cagers get going against Cambodia on Dec. 7, then play Indonesia on Dec. 9, Malaysia on Dec. 11 and Thailand on Dec. 13.

"We're not just physically prepared but also mentally ready for this competition," said Baculi, who will rely on versatile Fil-Am Gabe Norwood, two-time PBL Most Valuable Player Jason Castro and UAAP MVP Jerry Cruz.

The team, though, will leave without former Ginebra center Alex Crisano, who failed to submit necessary documents.

National women's coach Fritz Gaston also expressed confidence in his team's chances following a runner-up finish in the Southeast Asian Basketball Association (Seaba) in Thailand last October.

"This is for the 90 million Filipinos and we'll make sure they won't feel ashamed," said Mike Romero, SEAG basketball delegation head. "We'll bring home the gold."

Bumgarner big in maiden Formula race

MARK BUMGARNER, ONE OF THE country's finest young drivers, made a successful transition from karting to Formula cars recently, finishing an impressive ninth overall after two races of the 2007 Asian Formula Renault Challenge at the Shanghai International Circuit in China.

Driving for Asia Racing Team (ART) Motorsports, the 16-year-old Bumgarner distinguished himself in the 17-man driver field by holding his own against his more experienced rivals and finishing third among Asian drivers.

Starting 11th at the start of the combined race in the morning, Bumgarner overtook several rivals and was running eighth when he spun out while trying to pass the seventh-running Chinese Formula Renault driver Jim Kato. He settled for 15th place.

But the rookie son of an American businessman and his Filipino wife from Zambales already made his mark by posting a third-place windup among Asian drivers.

ART Motorsports team manager Philippe Descombes praised Bumgarner's results and the team's progress in the very competitive Shanghai races.

"Mark did well today," Descombes commented. "I'm really impressed at how he makes progress each time he takes the car out on the track."



MARK Bumgarner tackles the final straight for a third-place windup in the 2007 Asian Formula Renault Challenge at the Shanghai International Circuit in China. Inset, the 16-year-old protégé of ART Motorsports on the podium.

"He was quite brave fighting with the more experienced drivers," Descombes added. "I think that based on what we have seen this weekend, Mark can be very competitive next year in Formula Renault 2.0."

Bumgarner attended the Bob Bondurant Racing School for five days early this year to qualify for an open-wheel racing license in the United States and gained high-level skills needed for Formula racing. He successfully completed a

three-day test with ART Race Team Formula Renault 2.0 in Zhuhai last October on wet and dry conditions.

The younger brother of former Asian karting queen Michele Bumgarner is slated to race again in Formula Renault on Dec. 15 and 16 in Zhuhai in a support race for A1GP and AF3 events.

Stints in Formula Renault series next year in Asia and other Formula classes in North America have also been scheduled for him.



RING OF FIRE: Organizers of the "Ring of Fire: World Team Challenge," a fight card involving the world's toughest mixed martial arts masters, speak in yesterday's news conference in Quezon City. From left, Herth Herring; Ron Dela Torre, CEO of Platinum Fighting Productions; Kino Leopoldo and Benny Tuazon, Jr.

AUGUST DELA CRUZ

Int'l mixed martial arts stars mix it up at Big Dome Dec. 9

By Marc Anthony Reyes

IS THERE A PLACE FOR A NO-HOLDS-barred sport like mixed martial arts in a country where people take things personally?

Apparently there is, according to Fearless Fighting Productions USA chief Benny Tuazon Jr., who said that the fight sport has been enjoyed by enthusiasts here for years.

"I tell you one thing, it has been here for a long time," said Tuazon, who is born to Filipino parents in the United States. "We are just taking it to the next level by bringing all the best fighters in the world, especially those from the United States and Europe."

The roots of the sport here prompt-

ed Tuazon to make the Philippines the first Asian country to witness mixed world-caliber martial arts action through the "Ring of Fire: World Team Challenge," on Dec. 9 at the Araneta Coliseum.

"The sport raised eyebrows in the 1990s," said Tuazon, "but so many guidelines have been implemented since then."

Tuazon said that action in the Ring of Fire fight program will be for real.

"Our reputation is important to us," said Hawaiian Kino Leopoldo, who will coach the alternate team. "There are two ways to go outside the ring. One is to get carried out like this (clutching somebody by the neck) and on a stretcher. Horizontally."

Sporting tattoos that covered his massive 6-foot-3 frame, Leopoldo added: "You will see every single guy fighting top-notch, high-caliber action. We have to protect our reputation."

There will be four teams clashing in the explosive one-day event—Team Gokor, Team Shamrock, Team Gracie

and Team Barnett.

Big-name mixed martial artists Jeff Monzon, Renato "Babalu" Sobral, Rico Rodriguez, John Marsh, Yuki Kondo and Jorge "Macaco" Patino arrived over the weekend to help promote the event. They will visit malls and schools prior to the Dec. 9 action, according to Tuazon.

Barbosa stuns Iranian GM, shares lead with So, Laylo

From page A21

pero Pichay Cup International Open chess championship at the Duty Free Fiesta Mall in Paranaque City.

The 21-year-old Barbosa exploited the white pieces to prevail in 35 moves of an Old Indian and share top spot with three other perfect scorers.

Sharing the limelight with the former national junior champion from Taytay, Rizal, were countrymen GM Darwin Laylo, GM-candidate Wesley So and top seed GM Ni Hua of China, who also tallied 3.0 points.

So beat No. 19 WGM Li Ruofan of China in 45 moves of the Bishop's opening to prop up his bid for his third and final GM result.

Laylo, who earned his GM title during the Asian Individual Chess Championships in Mandaua City in September, humbled unheralded David Elorta.

Living up to his lofty Elo rating of 2641, Ni subdued International Master Oliver Dimakilin in 59 moves of the Gruenfeld's Defense.

GM-candidate Jayson Gonzales whipped Chinese Shen Siyuan to join GM Rogelio Antonio Jr. and six others with 2.5 points each.

Unable to gain headway, Antonio, the country's highest ranked player, settled for a draw with IM Tito of Indonesia.

Also with the same score were GM-candidate Ronald Dableo, who tripped Ibary Adanate; Singapore-based IM Julio Catalino Sadorra, who split the point with Chinese GM Li Chao; IM Richard Bitoon, who trounced IM Barlo Nadera; Vietnamese GM Dao Thien Hai, who drew with Chinese WIM Huang Qian; and Vietnamese GM Nguyen Anh Dung, who thwarted Chinese WGM Gu Xiaobing.

Aguilar eyes two crowns Sunday

THE NAMSSA NATIONAL MOTOCROSS SERIES stages its championship round on Sunday at the Fast Track Circuit in Taguig City with Glenn Aguilar expected to stamp his name as the Philippines' greatest all-time champion.

Already with 22 national titles, Aguilar will be gunning for both the Pro 125 International and the Pro Open plums of this event organized by the National Motorcycle Sports and Safety Association.

Aguilar virtually bagged the Pro 125 International crown with 313 points or a 57-point margin over former junior champion Kenneth San Andres who accumulated 256 points.

However, Aguilar sees a tight duel for the Pro Open plum where he holds a 20-point edge over San Andres, his former teammate who's proving to be a worthy rival.

Aguilar tallied 335 points against San Andres (315) after splitting honors in the last leg.

SPORTS

Celts dump James-less Cavs; Spurs rip Blazers

BOSTON—THE BOSTON CELTICS POSTED AN 80-70 HOME win over the Cleveland Cavaliers, who struggled without the injured LeBron James on Sunday.

Ray Allen led the league-leading Celtics (14-2) with 20 points, but neither team shot well.

Boston made just 37.5 percent of its field-goal attempts and had 15 turnovers. Cleveland sank 32.9 percent of its shots and gave up the ball 18 times.

The victory, the ninth in a row at home for Boston, did little to impress coach Doc Rivers.

"There will be no video on this game, hopefully," Rivers told reporters.

"It was a win and we'll take the win."

Allen scored 13 of his points in the first half, which ended with Boston ahead, 43-39.

Daniel Gibson's three-pointer brought Cleveland within four at 48-44 with 8:59 to play but the next eight points belonged to Boston.

Kevin Garnett hit two free throws, then Rajon Rondo went on a six-point scoring run, hitting a driving layup off an assist by Paul Pierce then scoring on consecutive jumpers.

Rondo finished with 12 points, Garnett

THE SPURS'
Tim Duncan
holds his right
knee after a fall.



scoring nine and Pierce seven.

"We just didn't have the energy we normally come out with," Pierce, who was 2 of 7 from the field, told reporters.

Zydrunas Ilgauskas topped Cleveland with 12 points and 13 rebounds.

James, who sprained his left index finger on Tuesday, watched the game from the Cleveland bench. His is day-to-day.

Tim Duncan bruised his right knee and sprained his right ankle in a first-half fall in the

San Antonio Spurs' 100-79 home win over the Portland Trail Blazers. Tests on Monday will determine how long he will be out, the Spurs said.

Tony Parker had 27 points and eight assists in San Antonio's third successive win.

The Golden State Warriors streaked to their sixth consecutive victory by beating the Seattle SuperSonics, 109-96.

Carmelo Anthony scored 30 points and Marcus Camby pulled down 21 rebounds in the Denver Nuggets' 115-89 home win over the Miami Heat. Dwyane Wade was held to 13 points and Shaquille O'Neal scored only six.

Grant Hill and Amare Stoudemire each had 28 points and Steve Nash handed out 15 assists in the Phoenix Suns' 115-104 road win over the New York Knicks.

Eddy Curry and Stephon Marbury led the Knicks with 21 each. Marbury's father, who attended the game, died afterward in a New York hospital, The New York Times reported on its website.

Richard Hamilton had 19 points and Chauncey Billups 18 as the Detroit Pistons topped the New Jersey Nets, 118-95.

Hedo Turkoglu's three-pointer put Orlando in the lead to stay and the Magic beat the Los Angeles Lakers, 104-97. Rashard Lewis led Orlando with 18 points with Turkoglu getting 14. Kobe Bryant scored 28 for the Lakers.

Reuters

THE PACERS' Jeff Foster (10) grabs the loose ball as the Clippers' Cuttino Mobley closes in.

AP

Williams leads NBA Manila visitors

A HIGH-PROFILE NBA DELEGATION, led by former Detroit and Toronto standout Jerome Williams, will be flying to Manila on Dec. 10 to look into opportunities at community projects and the country's sports development programs.

Aside from Williams, who is one of the National Basketball Association's official goodwill ambassadors, also with the group are Donald Ross III, NBA Entertainment executive director, and Jemel Buck, operations director of Adams Center, a non-profit community center supported by the NBA.

Angeles University Foundation and Private Schools Athletic Association president Emmanuel Angeles is arranging the trip of the NBA contingent.

Angeles described the group's visit as a "chance of a lifetime for

Philippine sports."

"We are pleased that the NBA has chosen the Philippines, whose fans are avid watchers of the NBA games and its icons, to share its expertise and knowhow as part of its community outreach," Angeles said.

Angeles disclosed that the NBA wants to put up an international basketball academy locally and another huge project "that we will give them the privilege to announce once they are here."

He added that the inputs and insights gained from the visit "will also be valuable in enhancing the Private Schools Athletic Association as an institution and its programs nationwide."

Acting as group spokesman is the 6-foot-9 Williams, a former Georgetown University star who earned the moniker 'Junk Yard Dog' for his

tenacity and work ethic during his nine-year NBA stint.

Williams was an active social and civic leader during his playing days so when he retired, he was tapped as an NBA Cares Community Ambassador.

His role includes working with community and youth programs that support education, family development and health-related causes.

On the other hand, Ross joined the staff of NBA Entertainment in 1997. Among his accomplishments was developing a weekly video satellite service for all 30 NBA teams. He was also the NBA Players Association basketball camp director in 1995 and 1996.

As operations director for the

Angeles said among the highlights of the group's seven-day visit is a courtesy call on President Macapagal-Arroyo and a session with Clark Development Corp. president Levy Laus.



WILLIAMS: Social and civic leader

Thailand foots SEAG bill for 3 countries

BANGKOK—HOSTS THAILAND WILL foot the bill for three cash-strapped countries to send teams to this week's Southeast Asian Games, an official said on Monday.

Games organisers agreed to cover the expenses of Laos, Cambodia and East Timor, which are among the world's poorest countries, after their hard-up Olympic committees asked for help.

"Thailand wants unity at the SEA Games and since we have 11 member countries, we want all of them to be here," Charoen Wattanasin, secretary of the organising committee, told Reuters.

East Timor, whose Olympic committee is beset by administrative and financial problems, will send only seven athletes to Nakhon Ratchasima, with Games organisers picking up the tab.

The teams from Laos and Cambodia will travel for hours along their notoriously potholed roads before being picked up at their borders by a fleet of Thai buses.

Charoen said accommodation and transport for the three countries' athletes will also be provided.

The biennial SEA Games officially open on Thursday, although the soccer and shooting events are already underway.

Some 5,000 athletes from Thailand, Malaysia, Singapore, Indonesia, East Timor, Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia, Brunei, Myanmar and the Philippines, will compete in 43 sports, with 475 gold medals up for grabs.

Reuters

US looks forward to Davis Cup title defense

PORLAND, OREGON—AFTER wrapping up its first Davis Cup title in 12 years, the United States looks forward to a daunting run of likely away ties in its 2008 defense.

Although the triumphant Americans have become formidable on hardcourt surfaces, doubles specialist Bob Bryan accepts they face an uphill task playing top claycourt teams away from home.

"It's going to be tough to win two singles matches against a Spain or an Argentina," Bryan told a news conference after losing his reverse singles to Russia's Igor Andreev on Sunday.

The US has been drawn to play Austria away in their opening World Group match in February. After that, it faces the prospect of France at home.



JAMES Blake (left) receives a hug from US team captain Patrick McEnroe following his victory over Dmitry Tursunov.

AP

A key to the Americans 2007 success was winning two tricky away ties against the Czech Republic, in the first round, and Sweden in the semi-finals.

"The win in Ostrava was big because we played a claycourt away tie against a very good team," US captain Patrick McEnroe said as he celebrated his team's

breakthrough Davis Cup success after seven unsuccessful years in charge.

"The three other years we've made it far, the semis twice and the finals, we played very strong countries on clay.

"So this year, when we won that, we thought maybe things can break right for us," added McEnroe, whose team completed a 4-1 victory over Russia in the final.

Major pluses for the US in their campaign were the form of world number six Andy Roddick, who won all six singles matches, and the dominance of the Bryan brothers, the world's top-ranked doubles team.

In this final, though, the pivotal match was the 6-3 7-6 6-7 6-7 6-7 victory by James Blake over Mikhail Youzhny.

Reuters

Japanese batters stay unbeaten; Koreans subdue Filipinos, 13-1

TOKYO—JAPANESE MEDIA MONDAY hailed their all-star baseball team's narrow win over rival South Korea, but the squad insisted they were taking nothing for granted on the road to the Beijing Olympics.

The Japanese, led by former Hanshin Tigers skipper Senichi Hoshino, edged out the South Koreans, usually their top competitors in Asia, in a nail-biting 4-3 Olympic qualifier in Taiwan Sunday.

The Mainichi Shimbun's front page showed Hoshino shaking hands with closer Koji Uehara, of the Yomiuri Giants, who shut out the Koreans in the last inning.

"Hoshino Japan are on the verge of achieving checkmate for the

Olympics," the Mainichi wrote.

The Sankei Shimbun said: "Japan clinched an all-out battle and took a big step towards the Beijing Olympics."

With the win, Japan now lead the four-team group with two wins and no losses at the 24th Asian Baseball Championship.

Japan take on Taiwan on Monday and a surprisingly strong performance by the home side could still hand the championship to South Korea, which routed last-placed Philippines, 13-1.

"I haven't been so excited in such a long time," Osamu Higashio, a pitcher-turned-commentator, wrote in the Sports Nippon. "Now we face the final game. If players perform their abili-

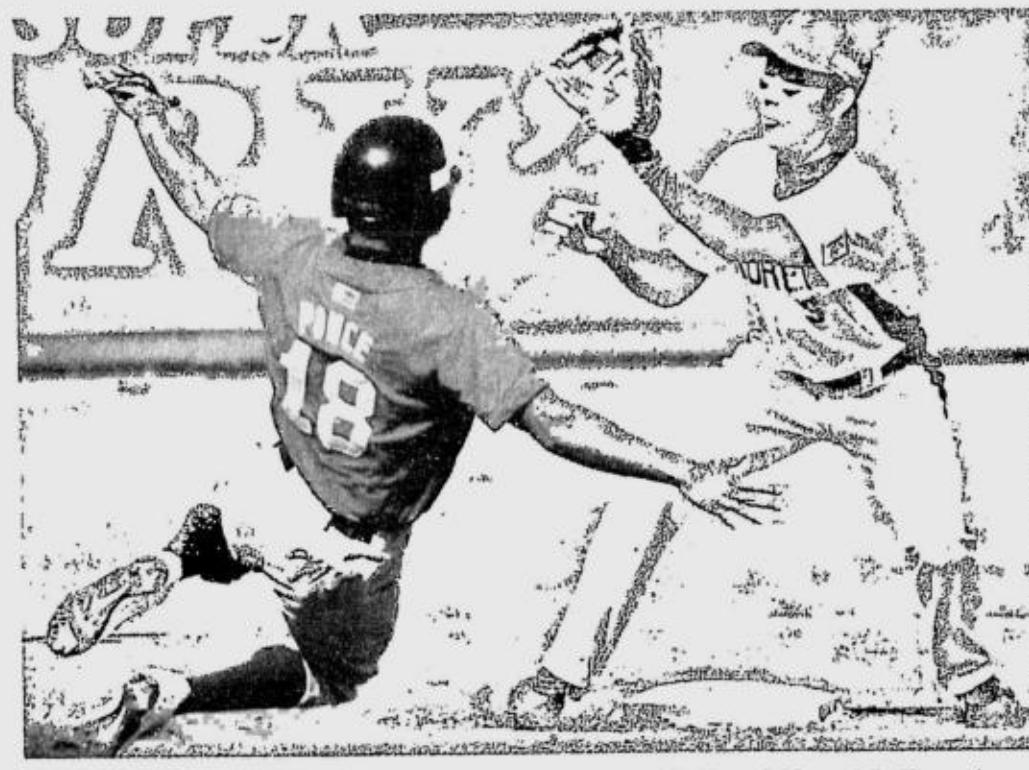
ties, we can see good results."

Hoshino has already named as the starting pitcher Nippon Ham Fighters right-hander Yu Darvish, who won this year's Sawamura Award for best Japanese hurler.

Only one team will be awarded a berth at the Beijing 2008 Olympics, while the second and third-placed teams will have to compete in March with six other teams from outside Asia for the final three berths.

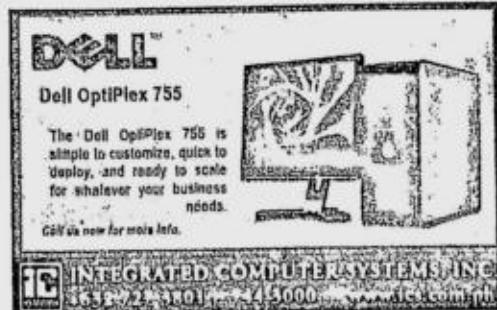
In addition to host China, which has an automatic berth, the United States, Cuba and the Netherlands have already qualified.

Japan last year beat Cuba to win the inaugural 16-nation World Baseball Classic tournament.



THE PHILIPPINES' Jonash Ponce (18) slides to second base while Korea's Young Min Ko catches the ball during the first inning of their game in Taichung Monday. Korea won 13-1.

REUTERS



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Peso hits 7 1/2-yr high of 42.27 to \$1

IN THIS ISSUE

- Tax breaks for proposed REITs sought /B4
- Strong peso delays RP export plan /B5

Local currency seen breaching 42 level soon

By Doris C. Dumla

AN UPBEAT FOREIGN INVESTOR SENTIMENT ALLOWED the peso to defy rough regional currency markets and rally to a new seven-and-a-half-year high of 42.27 to a dollar be-

fore closing at 42.305 yesterday in the aftermath of a failed mutiny last week.

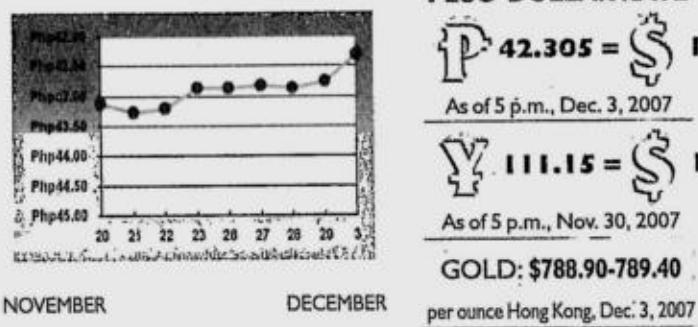
The peso, which was also supported by the strong inflows from overseas Filipino workers that accumulat-

ed during the long weekend, gained 44.5 centavos from Thursday's finish of 42.75 to a dollar.

Currency traders said the local currency opened at 42.55 and appreciated

PESO /B4

INDICATORS CURRENCIES

**STOCK MARKET****Shares close higher**

SHARE PRICES closed 1.4-percent higher yesterday, buoyed by hopes of a further interest rate cut in the United States, dealers said.

They said investors had overcome nervousness over a possible fallout following last week's siege of the Peninsula Hotel by mutinous soldiers.

The composite index finished up 48.33 points at 3,626.88, off a high of 3,652.34. A total of 3.7 billion shares worth P6.4 billion changed hands.

There were 113 gainers and 16 decliners, while 36 stocks were unchanged.

The broader all-share index rose 34.89 points to 2,207.46.

Dealers said a pull-back by market heavyweight Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co. (PLDT) tempered gains in early trade.

"Investors overcame their nervousness (following a short-lived rebellion in Makati last Thursday) and are focused again on the bullish outlook for the domestic economy, and encouraged as well by gains in overseas markets late last week," said Ron Rodrigo of DBP Daiwa Securities.

Wall Street advanced Friday, extending the previous day's gains, after Fed Chair Ben Bernanke's comments boosted optimism the US central bank will lower interest rates again this month after cutting them in its last two policy meetings.

Philippine financial markets were closed on Friday for a public holiday.

"Political uncertainty is weighing on investors' minds but it's hard for them to ignore the pace of economic growth that we are now seeing, which is the fastest in many years," Rodrigo said.

PLDT fell P40 to P3,060, giving up early gains.

Ayala Land advanced 50 centavos to P15.75 while Metrobank jumped P2.50 to P56.50.

San Miguel Corp.'s A-shares, limited to local investors, rose 50 centavos to P50.50. The food and beverage conglomerate's B-shares were steady at P50.50.

AFP

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BUSINESS

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 4, 2007

Politics in business

THE PCCI WILL ELECT ITS 2008 president this week.

That's the Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry, which is the biggest business organization in the country—and perhaps even the most influential.

In fact, the PCCI is so influential, it's so-called Three Stooges have turned what should have been their temporary stints in the organization into lifetime careers.

Thus, according to certain PCCI members, the organization today is becoming even more politicized.

Insiders disclosed that this year's election for president, which is to be performed by the 20-man board, is turning out to be a three-cornered fight.

One supposedly enjoys the backing of this coup-attempt-infested yet-still-cute administration of Gloria Arroyo, while another supposedly got the endorsement of the newly pardoned man called Band ... Wrist Band.

What's this? Edsa IV? And so do you still wonder why, in this country, military adventurism is developing into a separate industry?

ANYWAY, it seems that only the incumbent PCCI president, Samie Lim, who is into retail business, such as the "Automatic" chain of appliance stores and the "Blims" chain of furniture stores, has no political affiliation.

Still, the selection of the PCCI president owes much to the "proxy" system. The board actually picks the president from among its members, who in turn elected themselves to the board through ... well, "proxies."

The so-called Three Stooges control majority of those proxies. So much so that one of them at any one time serves as PCCI chair, another serves as "honorary" chair and the last one becomes chair "emeritus."

Come on, momon, how many kinds of chair does a business organization really need?

In business, anyway, the guessing game concerns who, among the three aspirants above, will be the Three Stooges support.

One this year, the PCCI leadership has somehow showed the way in targeting the country's economic growth rate, when Lim set a growth target of 7 percent for GDP.

This administration then adopted Plan 789, which targeted a 7-

BREAKTIME

Conrado R.
Banal III



the income of the "asyCUDA" contract for its project.

Our contacts at BOC, however, reveal that the PCCI earns at least P30 million (gross) from the system.

Just where the rest of the money goes, may be an interesting subject of investigation by Congress.

Now, replacing the PCCI in the "asyCUDA" are three private contractors. The real identities of the people behind those three lucky groups are still hush-hush.

ONE of the grand plans of the publicly listed TKC Steel Corp., which just did a "follow on offering," or FOO, is to become the country's first integrated steel mill.

That is the long-term goal, of course. But today the company is refurbishing the two blast furnaces that it acquired (free of charge) from the new owners of the plant of the defunct National Steel Co.

Heading the steel project is Ben Tiu, the eldest of three brothers (including Gerry and Benjamin), a family that has been in the steel business as producers of pipes for the past 50 years or so.

So what makes the Tiu brothers think that this country, which have only low-grade iron deposits, can compete with the likes of China in the steel industry?

From what I heard from the presentation of TKC Steel to fund managers, the company is going for niche market in seamless steel pipes for oil and gas industries. Thus, it does not intend to compete head-on against the giant steel companies in the world.

Besides, the Philippines may have "low" grade iron ore—or at least not as high a grade of iron ore from, say, Chile—but such a difference in iron ore grade can be offset by the rising cost of fuel.

I mean, really, how far away do you think Chile is from the TKC plant, compared to Mindanao?

In other words, this country now has a chance in the steel business. The old wisdom on steel mills here is that we do not have enough iron deposits for giant steel plants.

But do we really need big mills? Remember, we use up less than 2 million tons of steel a year. And so, the iron deposits here can still feed small mills that, in turn, can be enough for our requirement.

Now, if only the mining industry can stage a resurgence ...

BSP currency swaps climb

By Doris C. Dumla

THE BANGKO SENTRAL NG Pilipinas has increased its use of currency swaps, engaging in heavier foreign exchange purchases in October.

Based on the latest official data, the BSP's outstanding foreign currency swaps surged to \$9.2 billion at end-October from \$6.35 billion at end-September as the central bank intervened heavily at the spot foreign exchange market to curb the peso's sharp appreciation against the US dollar.

In August, when global risk aversion due to the US property downturn reached its peak, the BSP's currency swaps were at \$5.2 billion.

But when the US Federal

Reserve eased its benchmark interest rates in September to prevent an economic recession, Asia's emerging markets, including the Philippines, marked a strong resurgence in foreign portfolio inflows.

Based on current levels, the BSP's outstanding swaps appear to be moving closer to the all-time record of \$10 billion posted in May.

Since last year, the BSP has been using swaps to mop up excess foreign exchange purchased from the Philippine Dealing System.

Swaps refer to the simultaneous purchase and sale of currencies over a specific maturity date. Upon maturity, the currencies are re-

turned at a previously agreed rate so that the concerned parties end up with their original currencies.

In the case of the BSP, it immediately locks up some of the foreign currencies it buys to prevent the equivalent peso amount from pouring into the financial system, effectively delaying the conversion of foreign inflows into the local currency.

The BSP's outstanding swaps also indicated how much more the country's gross international reserves (GIR) could rise if the contracts were to be scrapped.

In October, the GIR stood at a record \$32.4 billion, rising from \$30.9 billion in September.

Telco woes far from over as antigrift court asked to nullify board elections

By Daxim L. Lucas

AN OFFICIAL OF THE Philcomsat group of companies has asked the Sandiganbayan to stop the Presidential Commission on Good Government (PCGG) from recognizing the new set of company directors installed by Malacañang last month.

At the same time, Philippine Overseas Telecommunications Corp. (POTC) and Philippine Communications Satellite Corp. (Philcomsat) director and vice president Concepcion A. Poblador also asked the antigrift court to nullify the results of the Nov. 19, 2007 meeting that installed a new set of government nominees on the boards of both sequestered firms.

But Philcomsat director Erlinda I. Bildner, who leads the private shareholders' group, had repeatedly de-

nied the claims of the rival faction, which she called "abs

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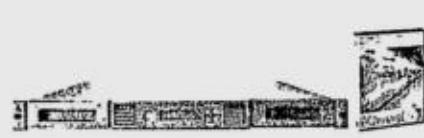
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Tax breaks for proposed REITs sought

PSE proposal aimed at boosting real estate sector

By Michelle V. Remo

THE PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE has asked the government to exempt from the 35-percent corporate income tax the proposed "real estate investment trusts" (REITs), it added.

REITs, which are already in existence in advanced capital markets, are companies that would invest in real estate and property projects. REITs sell their shares to the public by listing in stock exchanges.

The PSE said the government would not be disadvantaged by granting REITs income tax exemption, as these companies can help boost the real estate sector and the entire economy, and therefore, increase the aggregate income tax collection of the government.

"REITs will attract domestic and foreign investments thereby increasing transactions in the capital market and ultimately providing a powerful catalyst in spurring growth of the national economy," the PSE said in a discussion paper on the proposed REITs.

The paper was submitted to the Department of Finance, which will study whether the proposed income-tax exemption was reasonable.

The PSE said governments of other countries have provided a climate conducive for the development

ment of the REIT market mainly through the granting of tax exemption. "Their private sectors have therefore positively responded by putting up REITs," it added.

In Asia, countries that have REITs include Japan, Singapore, Hong Kong, South Korea, Taiwan, Thailand and Malaysia. Of these countries, Japan has the biggest REITs market with capitalization of \$30.99 billion.

"Within a span of five years, the number of REITs in Asia grew from five in 2001 to about 80 in August 2006," the PSE said.

The exchange said investments in REITs were considered liquid, a quality that direct investments in real estate could not provide. Those who want to liquefy their investments in REITs may do so by selling their shares in the stock market.

Investing in the booming real estate industry while maintaining liquidity was a key strength of REITs.

The proposed REITs will have a policy of allocating 85 percent of its net income before extraordinary item, depreciation and amortization or Nida for dividends to investors.

The REITs should also invest the bulk of their funds in real estate and property projects, such as shopping centers, hotels and residential development ventures.

DA lifts restrictions on meat imports from US, Canada

By Amy R. Remo

THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE recently lifted import restrictions on all meat imports from the United States and Canada.

Agriculture Secretary Arthur C. Yap has amended an order issued last July, imposing conditions on the importation of meat from these countries such as the following:

- Bone-in beef imports from these countries should come only from cattle of less than 30 months of age;
- Beef, whether boneless or bone-in should be devoid of specified risk materials (SRMs);
- Beef, whether boneless or bone-in, should come only from healthy ambulatory and now downer cattle;

- The age of the slaughtered cattle should be certified by the US Department of Agriculture or the Canadian Food Inspection Agency; and
- The production date or slaughter date of the beef should be included in the packaging label.

The DA had imposed these restrictions to prevent the entry of mad cow or Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy (BSE) disease into the country. The Office Internationale des Epizooties or Animal Health Organization earlier declared the United States and Canada as countries with "controlled BSE risks."

With the lifting of the restrictions, the Philippines could now provide full market access to US and Canadian meat suppliers.

Earlier, Yap also temporarily banned imports of domestic and wild birds along with poultry products from Virginia and Nebraska, following official confirmation by US authorities of the presence of the bird flu virus in those areas.

He said the ban and other emergency measures were necessary to protect human health and the poultry industry in the Philippines, which has remained free of bird flu ever since the H5N1 strain of this virus resurfaced in Asia in 2003.

The DA has also imposed a similar ban on all live bird and poultry imports from Togo, Korea and the United Kingdom after the presence of the bird flu virus had been detected in these countries.

Treasury rejects all bids for 91-day T-bills

THE GOVERNMENT YESTERDAY rejected all bids for the bellwether 91-day treasury bills and some offers for the 364-day bills to keep banks from pushing interest rates up.

Had officials of the Bureau of the Treasury accepted the bids for the three-month securities, their average rate could have reached 3.809 percent, up by 13.7 basis points from the rate recorded in the auction two weeks ago.

The yield on the one-year debt instrument could have averaged at 5.667 percent, 10 basis points higher than the previous

rate, had the BTr accepted P2.5 billion worth of bids as stated in its borrowing program.

The BTr awarded only P1.195 billion worth of bids. The one-year T-bill rate averaged at 5.558 percent, slightly lower than the rate in the last auction.

The most attractive debt paper yesterday were the 182-day bills, tenders for which amounted to P4 billion. This was double the P2 billion offering of the government. The BTr accepted P2 billion worth of bids for this instrument.

The yield on the 182-day bills settled at 4.637 percent, down by 5.5 basis points from its previous rate.

The move of banks to seek an increase in the 91-day T-bill rate surprised some BTr officials who expected a drop in the yields.

The officials said the yields demanded by banks were unreasonably high, considering that the government did not have to borrow too much from the domestic market.

They noted that the budget deficit for the year was not expected to exceed the ceiling of

P63 billion set for 2007.

The government recently sold its remaining 60-percent stake in PNOC-Energy Development Corp. (PNOC-EDC) for P58.5 billion.

Privatization revenues generated so far this year were said to be more than enough to compensate for shortfalls in tax collection.

The economy also performed better-than-expected in the first three quarters of the year, growing by 7.1 percent year-on-year. The government set its economic growth target at only 6.1-6.7 percent.

Michelle V. Remo

Peso hits 7 1/2-yr high of 42.27 to \$1

From page B1

throughout the day to close near the day's high of 42.27, the highest level hit by the peso since touching 42.07 on June 6, 2000.

Volume traded at the Philippine Dealing System amounted to \$621.1 million.

"I think that in the case of the Philippines, the strength of the peso is a one-way street. It's just a question of up to how much it will rise further," a foreign banker said.

The banker predicted that the peso could break past the 42:1 barrier and hit a high of 41.75 against the greenback before the year ends.

A currency dealer from a big local bank said: "The market is

focusing again on fundamentals, on increased flows during the period so it favored the Philippine peso. Plus, we might be seeing a further weakening of the US dollar so it's also helping the sentiment other than the continuous inflows."

The trader said the foreign exchange market had discounted the short-lived political noise caused by the stand-off at the Manila Peninsula at the Makati central business district last Thursday.

The peso, now Asia's best performing currency this year, has gained 15 percent against the dollar after ending 2006 at 49.03:\$1.

Other Southeast Asian currencies also firmed up against the dol-

lar yesterday but concerns on the US property downturn weighed down other currencies in the region like the Singapore dollar, Taiwan dollar and the Korean won.

Consuelo Garcia, head of ING Philippines' financial markets, said the investment outlook was boosted by progress in the government's privatization of large power assets.

For instance, she noted the government's receipt last Thursday of P58.5 billion in payments for the sale of a controlling stake in geothermal crown jewel PNOC Energy Development Co.

ING, along with the state-owned Development of the Philippines, was a financial ad-

viser to the PNOC-EDC privatization. The winning bidder was a consortium led by the Lopezes.

Garcia said also noted the government's successful bidding for the 175-megawatt Ambuklao-Binga hydropower plant complex, which was won by the Abott group.

"The high-profile privatization of Transco (National Transmission Co.) will also fetch a very positive sentiment," she said.

Currency traders said similar to what happened during the failed Oakwood mutiny launched by Trillanes' group in 2003, the foreign exchange market was expected to rally after the weekend drama.

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Automatic Center opens P200-M 'superbranch'

By Ronnel W. Domingo

AUTOMATIC APPLIANCES INC. HAS opened a P200-million "superbranch" at the Araneta Center in Quezon City to integrate its three appliance and furniture stores in a single, one-hectare venue.

Company president Samie Lim said products sold by Automatic Center, Blims Fine Furniture and Sogo Home and Office Center were gathered into one store to make room for further business innovations.

"In 1977, (our group) introduced in the country the 'room setting' style of selling furniture, innovating from the old way of ordering through catalogs before the products were actually made," Lim said. "The Automatic Super Center is our platform for a new innovation."

He said three condominium units were built within the "superbranch" to serve as showcases of the options buyers could adopt in their homes and of the company's products.

Lim said that aside from stores, the two-story establishment has an atrium that would host an area for real estate exhibits and trade fairs, including space reserved for the chamber of handicraft makers.

He added that the Automatic Super Center had a soft opening last week, with the appliances section in the ground floor now accessible to the public, but the



LIM

grand opening was set for mid-December.

Lim said the appliance section was designed to be "interactive, entertaining and educational."

At the same time, the Blims section that cater to the high-end market would have at least 10 display areas for every room in the home.

Automatic Center, which is celebrating its 60th year in the business, has also opened its other new branch at the Hong Kong Sun Plaza along Roxas Boulevard in the southern area of Manila.

Lim said another store would be opened next year in Alabang, Muntinlupa to cater to the Southern Luzon market.

Gov't cancels scheduled corn importation

THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE HAS canceled the planned importation of 270,000 metric tons of yellow corn.

Agriculture Assistant Secretary Dennis B. Araullo said private companies who wanted to continue importing could do so, but would not be able to credit their importation under the volume approved by the DA.

"They won't be able to avail themselves of the zero-tariff importation for corn. If they plan to import, they have to pay the 35-percent tariff," said Araullo, who is also the Ginintuang Masaganang Ani Corn program director.

Araullo said that under a zero-tariff importation, the landed price of corn would be less than P15 a kilo. With the tariff, landed price could go as high as P18 a kilo.

Earlier, local feed millers have requested the duty-free importation of at least 700,000 MT of yellow corn due to the perceived corn production shortfall this year of as much as 1.8 million MT.

However, the government had projected the shortfall to reach 500,000 MT only, and had thus approved the importation of 400,000 MT in two tranches of 200,000 MT each.

Of the approved volume, only 130,000 MT had been procured and delivered early this year.

Last October, the bidding for the supply of 70,000 MT of corn failed due to high world market prices and the rising transport and delivery costs.

In the meantime, Araullo assured consumers and private companies that the canceled importation would have no effect on the local prices of corn.

In fact, he said, corn prices were only about P11.50 a kilo and this might even go further down during the harvest season early next year.

Amy Remo

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Strong peso delays RP export plan

Council fends off threats to trade, postpones agenda until mid-'08

By Ronnel W. Domingo

FENDING OFF MORE THREATS to the local sector, the Export Development Council has been forced to hold off until mid-2008 the planning process for its new export plan.

Sergio Ortiz-Luis Jr., EDC vice chair and president of Philippine Exporters Confederation, said the plan that was initially meant to take effect in January was delayed due to the strengthening of the peso, historic global oil price hikes, more increases in the price of electricity and the slowdown of the United States economy.

These factors have forced organized exporters to trim this year's target from 11-percent growth to 6 percent or even lower.

"We need (the extension) to be able to really put more flesh to the plan," he said. "(These) trends moving against our survival have come in rapid succession in the second half of this year."

According to the official, the EDC needs to review and consoli-

date the drafts that Philexport regional units and industry associations have prepared.

"The resulting plan must be practical enough for the government and private sector to achieve," Ortiz-Luis said.

Drawing up the export plan may take until May, when the council hopes to submit the proposal to President Macapagal-Arroyo for approval, he said.

Ortiz-Luis reiterated calls for export groups to avail of a P280-million export promotion fund, of which only P30-million worth of projects has been tapped.

The fund was put together earlier this year to enable organized exporters to upgrade their ability to win bigger markets and counter the effects of a strengthening peso which has been eroding their margins.

Last week, Ortiz-Luis urged the government to intervene and stop the continued appreciation of the peso amid fresh forecasts that the currency would further strengthen in the coming years.

He said there was still a lot the government could do to address the trend that has been adversely affecting families of overseas Filipino workers and those whose livelihood depend on exports.

"The government can choose to ... peg the exchange rate to P47 to the dollar," Ortiz-Luis said. "It has always been saying that the steady uptrend is good for Filipinos, but nobody is benefiting from this except the government and smugglers."

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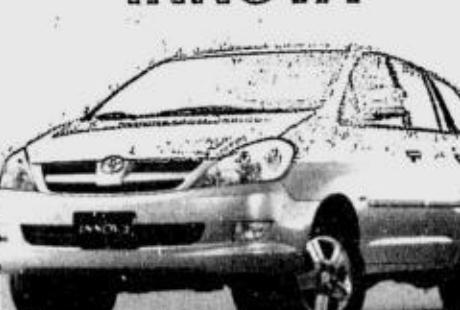
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Financing is subject to TFS approval

The worst is over

MR. BEARBULL



Ron Nathan

THE OWNER OF THE PENINSULA hotel wrote a one-word message to the President for all the damage done. It simply said "TANKS." Actually, it wasn't a tank that rammed the entrance but an armored personnel carrier accompanied by two typhoid carriers. Throwing tear gas bombs into the lobby blacked out the electric and the managers had to switch to gastric. It ruined the 100-point rally and won't do the tourist industry much good.

A lot of readers remember that in another newspaper, I used to write about alternative medicines so I still receive a lot of queries. As I am not qualified to answer some of them, I passed them on to my two doctor friends and here are their replies:

Q. I hear that cardiovascular exercise can prolong your life. Is this true?

A. Your heart is only good for so many beats so don't waste them on exercise. Speeding up your heart will not make you live longer. That is like saying you can extend the life of your car by driving faster. Take a nap.

Q. Should I cut down on meat and eat more fruit and vegetable?

A. What does a cow eat? Grass and corn and these are vegetables. So, a steak is an efficient method of delivering vegetables to your system.

Q. How can I calculate my body-fat ratio?

A. If you have one body plus fat, the ratio is one to one.

Q. Aren't fried food bad for you?

A. Food is fried in vegetable oil. How can vegetables be bad for you?

Q. Will sit-ups make my tummy smaller and firmer?

A. When you exercise a muscle, it gets bigger. You should only do sit-ups if you want a bigger stomach.

Q. Is swimming good for your figure?

A. If swimming is good for your figure, then explain the shape of whales.

Thank you doctors for enlightening us. A caring client who imports medical equipment sent me a tense machine and a corset, corset helps support my back, which is getting better. I am still withdrawing from the 200-meter hurdles next year in Beijing.

It has been another volatile market but both Chair Bernanke and the vice chair of the FED hinted that more interest-rate cuts would be needed to bolster the economy.

will continue to perfect the exchange rate in a gradual, proactive and manageable manner, give further role to the market in determining the exchange rate, and will bring flexibility to the currency with a view to enabling capital account convertibility." The EU trade deficit with China has increased 30 percent to \$251 billion and trade tensions have sharpened in recent months as the yuan has fallen sharply against the strong euro.

China wants domestic consumption to play a bigger role in economic growth and place less reliance on exports. China is aware of the tensions with the US and the EU but allowing the yuan to appreciate gradually is not in response to this, it also has benefits to China to help slow down its growth to a sustainable rate rather than risk overheating. China has barrier-free access to the EU and must reciprocate.

Last Friday, the Phisix jumped 100 points at the opening and after a month of continuous foreign selling averaging P500 million a day, they suddenly became net buyers of P800 million. Yesterday, they were again net sellers of P400 million. The market should resume its up-trend and as usual, the newsletter shows foreign activity, stock by stock. I was disappointed that after a 7.5-percent GDP growth in the election quarter, the third quarter GDP growth fell to 6.6 percent, less than the 6.8 percent expected by analysts. To date, government spending has increased 8.3 percent; agricultural production, 5.6 percent, and services, 7.2 percent. However, exports dropped 7.5 percent and this might drag on through the fourth quarter. We need the bidding for Transco to go well and I have composed a PSALM.

Typhoon Mina was heading for Bicol but got lost and ended up in Ilocos (naughty). The weather station has changed its name to the weather station. Typhoon Hagibis entered the country on Friday but was turned away as its passport had expired.

In company news, BHP has made a bid for RTZ, which was promptly rejected. The Phisix appears to have bottomed and in an 11-page study with eight recommendations, our research department projects the index to reach 5,000 in 2008. Clients should have a copy.

I miss readers' letters so you can reach me at mrbearbull@hotmail.com but do not ask advice on stocks or IPOs as this is the function of your broker.

ALI to start P2.31-B retail, BPO venture in Mindanao

Joint venture with land owners formed

By Elizabeth Sanchez-Lacson

PROPERTY GIANT AYALA LAND INC. (ALI) is embarking on a P2.31-billion mixed-use project in Davao City, its first retail and business process outsourcing venture in Mindanao.

In a disclosure to the stock exchange, ALI senior vice president Jaime E. Ysmael said the company had entered into a joint venture agreement with landowners Anflo Management & Investment Corp., Pioneer Trading & Supply Co. Inc. and Davao Motor Sales Co. to develop the nine-hectare property in Bajada, Davao City for a mixed-use development with retail and business process outsourcing (BPO) facilities.

Ysmael said 40,000 square meters of the property was earmarked for retail development, while another 20,000 sq. m. would be for BPO development.

The project was estimated to cost P2.31 billion, with ALI's equity investment in the project equivalent to 67 percent.

This venture follows a residential development project in Cagayan de Oro, called Alegria Hills.

Alegria Hills is a 53-hectare high-end residential subdivision project which is 10 minutes away from Limketkai Mall and the major business district in the area.

In the meantime, the company said that for the first nine months of the year, it had spent P10.7 billion for project and capital expenditures. This was 35 percent more than the P7.9 billion spent in the same period last year and is already 66 percent of the 2007 budget of P16.2 billion.

Residential development projects accounted for the largest share of ALI's capex at P5.4 billion, followed by shopping centers, 32 percent or

September, which may be completed by April 2008.

Other BPO buildings targeted for completion in 2008 are the San Lazaro Building 1 in Manila, and Glorietta 5 in Makati.

ALI earlier inked a joint venture with Manila Jockey Club Inc. (MJCI) for a two-tower BPO office development in the former San Lazaro Race-track property in Sta. Cruz, Manila. This BPO office complex will sit on a 1.1 hectare property along Felix Huertas Street adjacent to the SM San Lazaro Mall and will form part of an Ayala Land mixed-use, fully integrated development in the area, which will comprise of retail, residential and commercial areas.

Groundbreaking of the Nuvali Technopod Building 1 in its Nuvali project in Laguna was held last

month.

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Source: Reuters' forex closing prices as of NY time—Nov. 30, 2007

* Various banks in Bahrain as quoted in Reuters' Screen.

** Asian time closing rate as of Nov. 30, 2007

PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE

(As of December 3, 2007)

STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
BANKS					
AsiaTrust Development Bank Inc.	8.3	8.3	8.3	8.3	17,000
Banco de Oro-EPIC Inc.	58	59	58	58.5	2,571,400
Bank of the Philippine Islands	63	63.5	62.5	63	5,806,000
China Banking Corp.	665	680	665	680	1,570
Citystate Savings Bank	23	23	23	23	300
Export and Industry Bank Inc.	0.39	0.39	0.39	0.39	350,000
Metropolitan Bank and Trust Company	56	57.5	56	56.5	4,555,400
Philippine National Bank	45	47	45	45	62,900
Philippine Savings Bank	60.5	60.5	60.5	60.5	2,000
Rizal Commercial Banking Corp.	24.75	25.5	24.5	24.5	985,000
Security Bank Corp.	71	71	71	71	232,000
Union Bank of the Philippines	44.5	45	44.5	44.5	350,700
OTHER FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS					
ATR Kaling Financial Corp.	4.1	4.1	4.1	4.1	70,000
Bankard Inc.	1.96	1.96	1.96	1.96	758,000
Citicorp Online.com Inc.	11.25	12	11.25	11.75	1,551,300
First Abacus Financial Holdings Corp.	0.92	0.92	0.92	0.92	30,000
First Metro Investment Corp.	42	42	42	42	1,000
I-Remi Inc.	5	5	4.95	4.95	368,000
Manila Financial Corp.	1,720.00	1,750.00	1,720.00	1,720.00	540
National Reinsurance Corp. of the Phils.	3	3.15	3	3.05	1,516,000
The Philippine Stock Exchange Inc.	1,050.00	1,085.00	1,050.00	1,075.00	12,770
Sun Life Financial Inc.	2,225.00	2,225.00	2,225.00	2,225.00	10
Wamco Corp.	1.5	1.54	1.5	1.5	816,000
ENERGY, ENERGY, POWER & WATER					
Abodo Power Corp.	5.1	5.3	5.1	5.1	2,571,000
East Asia Power Resources Corp.	0.31	0.32	0.31	0.32	250,000
First Gen Corp.	58	59	58	59	3,463,600
Fist Phil Holdings Corp.	64	66	64	67	1,243,700
Manila Water Company Inc.	16.75	16.75	16.75	16.75	2,389,600
Manila Electric Company	75	77	75	75	2,275,000
PNC Energy Development Corp.	6.9	7.2	6.9	7.1	30,666,000
Petrofin Corp.	6	6.2	5.9	6	20,684,000
Phoenix Petroleum Philippines Inc.	6.7	6.7	6.7	6.7	8,000
Trans-Asia Oil and Energy Devt' Corp.	1.4	1.48	1.38	1.42	8,433,000
FOOD, BEVERAGE & TOBACCO					
Alaska Milk Corp.	4.85	4.85	4.85	4.85	66,000
Alliance Tuna International Inc.	1.56	1.56	1.52	1.52	700,000
Gimbra San Miguel Inc.	23.5	23.5	23.5	23.5	222,000
Johilco Foods Corp.	50	52	50	51.5	2,382,000
Pancake House Inc.	8.6	8.6	8.6	8.6	3,000
Roxas Holdings	2.75	2.75	2.75	2.75	292,000
San Miguel Corp. "A"	61.5	63	60.5	60.5	223,400
San Miguel Corp. "B"	53.5	53.5	49.5	50.5	3,469,900
Swift Foods Inc.	0.43	0.43	0.42	0.42	400,000
Tanduay Holdings Inc.	5.9	5.9	5.8	5.8	6,000
Universal Robina Corp.	14	14.75	14	14.75	1,450,300
Vitan Corp.	0.33	0.33	0.33	0.33	110,000
CONSTRUCTION, INFRASTRUCTURE & ALLIED SERVICES					
E&I Corp.	4.6	4.6	4.6	4.6	1,251,000
Holcim Philippines Inc.	7.9	8	7.9	7.9	1,895,000
Republic Cement Corp.	4.3	4.3	4.3	4.3	256,000
Southeast Asia Cement Holdings Inc.	1	1.04	1	1.04	3,780,000
TKT Steel Corp.	8.9	9.3	8.9	8.9	1,051,000
CHEMICALS					
Chemtrec Technologies Inc.	4.15	4.25	4.15	4.2	237,000
DIVERSIFIED INDUSTRIALS					
Picrop Resources Inc.	0.36	0.37	0.36	0.36	2,810,000
Splash Corp.	6.6	6.8	6.4	6.4	1,119,000
HOLDING FIRMS					
ABS-CBN Broadband Corp. - Phil. Deposit Receipts	34	34.5	34	34	51,700
A. Soriano Corp.	3.3	3.3			

OBITUARIES

B7

REX BARRIDO BUENSUCESO

Born to Everlasting Life
on November 29, 2007 at the age of 60.



His bereaved wife Azucena "Babes"; children Sharon, Ryan, Kristine and Sean; brothers Bob, Ike and Berlin; sisters Barbara Ladrido and Tess Matsui; mother-in-law Nelly M. Miravalles; brothers-in-law, sisters-in-law, cousins, other relatives and friends request your prayers for the eternal repose of his soul.

His remains lie in state at Sanctuarium, (Chapel Cattleya) Araneta corner Quezon Avenue, Quezon City.

Interment will be on Wednesday, December 05, 2007 at 10:30 a.m., Heritage Park-Global City, Fort Bonifacio, Taguig, after the 8:00 a.m. Holy Mass at the Sanctuarium.

The partners, associates and staff of
GUERRERO & ACERON LAW OFFICES

condole with the family of

REDENDOR N. GUERRERO

Founding Partner and former Managing Partner

who died in the morning of November 30, 2007
at the age of thirty-eight.

His remains lie in state at the UP Chapel
where masses will be offered in the evenings at 8:00 p.m.
until December 8, 2007.

Interment will be at Heaven's Garden, Loakan, Baguio City
on December 9, 2007 at 11:00 a.m.

"The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want"

WIVINA "WEB" ONATE-ARMEÑA

December 17, 1925 – December 2, 2007

Her loving sisters, Nancy, Mary and Charito; nieces & nephews; and other relatives and friends request your prayers for the eternal repose of her soul.

Her remains lie in state at Chapel A, Christ the King Church, Greenmeadows, Quezon City. Interment will be on December 5 after the 10:00 a.m. Mass at the CTK Columbarium.

LA FUNERARIA PAZ, INC.

Tel. Nos. Quezon City : 712-3001 • 743-6502

Manila : 711-6931 to 35

NAME OF DECEASED	PLACE OF VIEWING	INTERMENT/CREMATION DATE & TIME	PLACE
JOSEPHINE B. RAGON	Chapel 15	To be announced later	To be announced later
JUANITO V. EDUARTE	Superior	Dec. 8, 2007 8:00 AM	Himlayang Pilipino
JULIANA UMPIIG	Imperial Classic	Dec. 4, 2007 2:00 PM	Eternal Garden

CLASSIFIEDS

NORTHRAIL

North Luzon Railways Corporation

INVITATION FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The North Luzon Railways Corporation (NorthRail) invites interested Security Agencies to submit Application for Eligibility and to Bid, for its Security Services requirement.

Prospective Bidders must have continuous services in the security/detective agency operations business for at least five (5) consecutive years. The Approved Budget for the Contract is Pesos: Eighteen Million Four Hundred Seventy Two Thousand Three Hundred Forty Four (PhP 18,472,344.00).

Applications for Eligibility and Bid Proposals (technical and financial) shall be evaluated using "PASS/FAIL" criteria. All bids shall be evaluated based on the Agency's offer for the contract under bidding and shall be subject to detailed evaluation, and to Post-qualification before an award is made. Bid prices submitted lighter than the Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC) or lower than the PADPAO rate per security guard shall be rejected outright.

For those interested, Application for Eligibility and Bid Documents will be available for issuance from December 4 to December 12, 2007 upon submission of a Letter of Intent addressed to the Chairperson of the Bids and Awards Committee (BAC), and payment of a non-refundable fee of Pesos: Six Thousand Five Hundred (PhP 6,500.00), at the NorthRail Office, 2nd Floor, Bonifacio Technology Center Building, Bonifacio Global City, Taguig, Metro Manila. Duly accomplished Application for Eligibility, as well as Technical and Cost Proposals shall be submitted on or before 12:00 noon of 27 December 2007, at the address mentioned above. Opening of Eligibility Documents and Bid Documents will be at 1:00 p.m. of the same date. All interested Bidders are required to attend the Pre-Bid Conference to be held on 14 December 2007, 10:00 a.m. at the NorthRail Office, 2nd Floor, Bonifacio Technology Center Building, Bonifacio Global City, Taguig, Metro Manila.

All particulars relative to the eligibility, bidding, evaluation of bids and award of contract shall be governed by the pertinent provision of RA 9184 and its Implementing Rules and Regulations.

Should you need any further information or clarification regarding the Project, you may get in touch with Ms. Alma Theresa T. Arizala, our BAC Secretariat at tel. 8563808 and Engr. Fermin M. Pulona, Jr. at 8944184.

NorthRail reserves the right to reject or accept any applications; and to annul or cancel the entire process, or reject all applications, as it may deem proper without incurring any liability to the affected applicants.

(Sgd.) GLORIA GEORGINA DJ JOTA
Chairperson, Bids and Awards Committee

(PDI--Nov. 29 & Dec. 4, 2007)

More Classifieds on pages

James Hao-Zamcelco
Advanced Science and Technology Institute
DOLE-NCR
Cherub Manpower

A18
A18
A19
B2

(PDI--December 3 & 4, 2007)

You can now checkout more jobs from JobMarket Libre everyday!

OBITUARIES

MIGUEL BORJA SANTOS

"IGUE"

Widow of the late

Victoria Dayrit Santos

Peacefully joined his Creator

on

December 2, 2007 at the age of 88.

His bereaved children Charito & Jojo Gavino, Manny, Tessie & Ding Castor, Alice Bernardo, Ike (†), Lulu & Butch Flores, Grandchildren, great-grandchildren, together with his sisters Corazon, Lourdes, Herminia, and Angelina request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

His remains lie in state at Our Lady of Grace Columbary & Mortuary Haven, 11th Ave., cor. 2nd St., Grace Park Caloocan City, Benjamin de Jesus Chapel.

Interment will be on Thursday, December 6, 2007 after the 2:00 P.M. Mass at Holy Cross Memorial Park, Novaliches, Quezon City.



Death Notice

ISABEL ESPIRITU

VALENZUELA

Aug. 4, 1916 - Dec. 3, 2007
Her body lies at Loreto Church,
Bustillos, Sampaloc, Manila
Interment will be on Dec. 8
8 a.m. at Manila Memorial
Parañaque City.

The Missionary Sisters
Servants of the Holy Spirit

announce the death of

SISTER ANITA, S.S.P.S.

(PRISCILA B. AGUSTINES)

on December 3, 2007 at the age of 90
at the Convent of the Holy Spirit, Quezon City.

Mass of the Resurrection will be offered on
Wednesday, December 5, 2007 at 3:00 p.m.
at the Convent of the Holy Spirit,
8 Poinsettia Road, Quezon City.

Interment will follow at the Christ the King Cemetery,
E. Rodriguez Avenue, Quezon City.

OBITUARY REQUIREMENTS:

- ① Copy of Death Certificate
- ② Any Identification document (I.D.)

PHILIPPINE ECONOMIC ZONE AUTHORITY

Baguio Economic Zone, Loakan Road, Baguio City

Tel. Nos. 447-3331; 447-3683; 447-3328; 447-3329; 447-3333; 447-1155

Fax: 447-3330; 447-4154

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Philippine Economic Zone Authority - Baguio City Economic Zone, through its Bids and Awards Committee (BAC), invites eligible bidders to apply for eligibility and to bid for the hereunder project:

Name of Project : Security Services' Contract for the Baguio City Economic Zone

Location : BCEZ, Loakan Road, Baguio City

Approved Budget for the Contract : P 4,569,096.78

Contract Duration : One Year

Prospective bidders should have experience in undertaking a similar project, within the last 3 years with an amount of at least 50% of the proposed project for bidding, and have key personnel and equipment (owned, leased or under purchase) available for the prosecution of the project. The list of minimum equipment requirement is indicated in the Eligibility Forms. The Eligibility Check/Screening as well as the Preliminary Examination of Bids shall use non-discretionary "pass/fail" criteria. Post-qualification of the lowest calculated bid shall be conducted. Bids received in excess of the ABC will be automatically rejected.

All particulars relative to Eligibility Statement and Screening, Bid Security, Performance Security, Pre-Bidding Conference(s), Evaluation of Bids, Post-Qualification and Award of Contract shall be governed by the pertinent provisions of R.A. 9184 and its Implementing Rules and Regulation (IRR).

The complete schedule of activities is listed, as follows:

Activities	Schedule
1. Issuance of Bid Documents	December 12-18, 2007
2. Pre-Bid Conference	December 18, 2007, 9:00 AM
3. Submission of Bids	January 8, 2008, 9:00 AM
4. Opening of Bids	January 8, 2008, 9:30 AM

Bid Documents will be available only to prospective bidders upon payment of a non-refundable amount of Two Thousand Pesos (P2,000.00). The method of payment will be cash basis only.

Bidders should not have any existing security services contract with any PEZA-BEZ locators to avoid conflict of interest.

In addition, bidders must have filed their latest annual income and business tax returns (VAT) and/or Percentage Tax covering six (6) months immediately prior to the Submission of bids via the Electronic Filing and Payment System (eFPS) of the BIR.

The PEZA reserves the right to accept or reject any bid, to annul the bidding process and assumes no responsibility whatsoever to compensate or indemnify bidders for any expenses incurred in the preparation of the bid.

(Sgd.) ENGR. MODESTO L. AGYAO, JR.

BAC Chairman

REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES
DEPARTMENT OF TRADE AND
INDUSTRY
BOARD OF INVESTMENTS

NOTICE

Notice is hereby given that ARCTURA CORPORATION is applying for registration with the Board of Investments (BOI) as New Export Producer of Oleochemical Products on a Non-Pioneer Status with capacity of 25,832

MTPY and with project/plant site located at Opoa, Mandaua City.

Any person with valid objection/s on the above-mentioned project may file his/her objection in writing, under oath, with BOI within three (3) days from the date of this publication.

(Sgd.) RUDY B. CAÑA

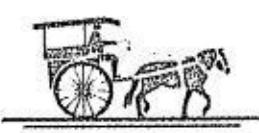
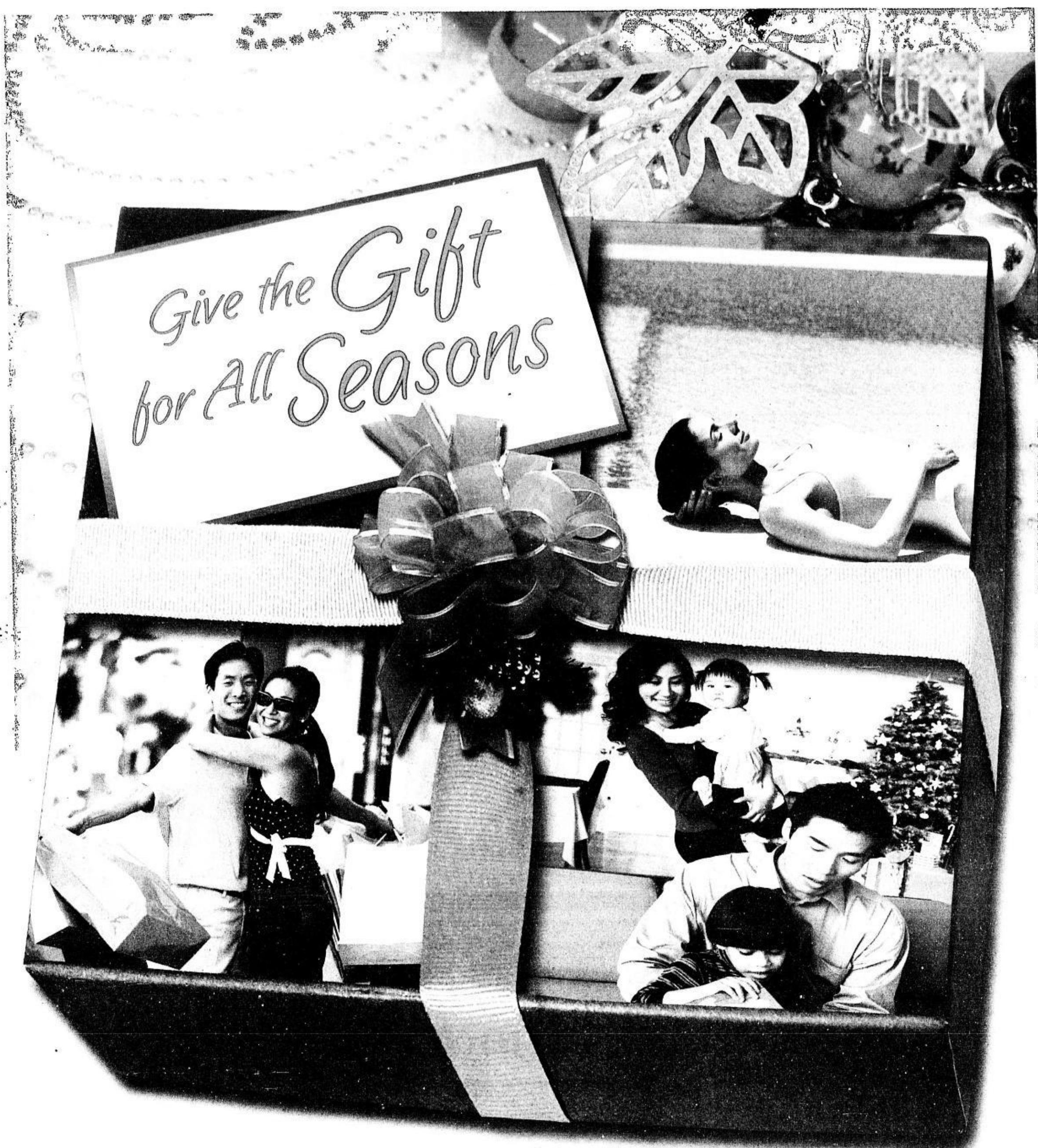
Director

Project Evaluation and Registration Department

(PDI - December 4, 2007)

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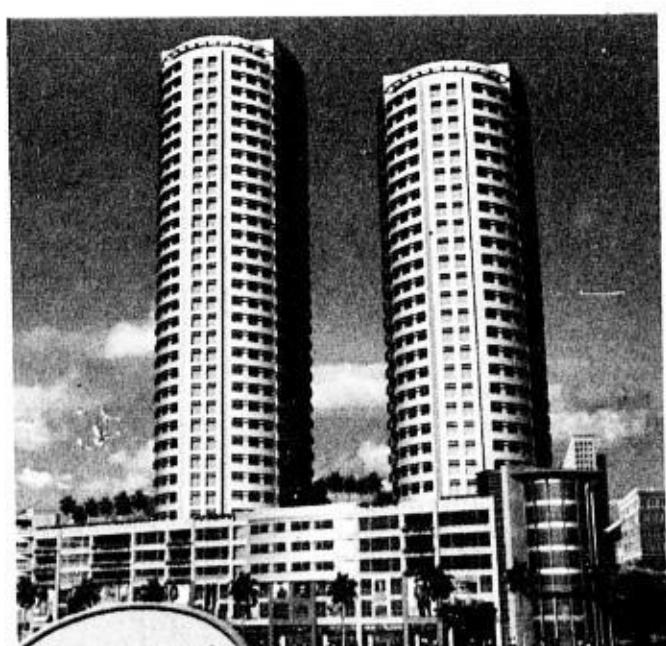
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CITY PLACE

PHASE 1

The New Face of Chinatown



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Raise your family in the lap of luxury in the heart of Chinatown. Choose from spacious two- to four-bedroom homes lavished with thoughtful touches. A bathtub in the master's bedroom. Panoramic views of Manila and its breathtaking sunset. An imposing lobby with four high-speed elevators. 24-hour security and privacy.

Relax and rejuvenate yourself in your own playground seven stories above Chinatown. Smell the flowers in a landscaped garden. Stroll along a trellised walkway. Go swimming while the kids have fun in the wading pool or playground. Enjoy a sauna in the gym or unwind in the game room. There's a day care center for kids and a business center for their parents, along with a clubhouse and function rooms.

Say goodbye to those long, stressful trips to the mall. At Cityplace, you're just an elevator ride away from a three-level shopping paradise. A few steps away, the Cityplace Richmonde Hotel is the place to do business with pleasure.

And the best of Chinatown are just a *calesa* ride away—from the *cafe* to the *chop suey* to the *chop shop*. Openin' and the *chop*—it's all there.

**Visit us this holiday season at our new showroom:
Burke Plaza, San Fernando corner Sto. Cristo, Binondo, Manila**



A.1 - Land Residential Development of



MEGAWORLD CORPORATION

www.megaworldcorp.com

IN THIS ISSUE
**■ Three letters that
spell class / C2**

LIFESTYLE

Website: www.inquirer.net/lifestyle

Editor Chelo Banal-Formoso

sms feedback: Inquirer life name/age/city/message to 2207 (Globe) and 386 (Smart) or email us at lifestyle@inquirer.com.ph

INSIDE OUT
Cory Quirino

Glow this Christmas

UNLOCK YOUR TRUE POTENTIAL TODAY.
 Release the radiant you that lies within.

Begin by adopting a new way of living.
 Its foundation should be a new way of seeing.

A second look

People habitually look at themselves in the mirror. It cannot be helped. If there is a mirror, you instinctively look.

The first time you look, the tendency is to simply check out the physical appearance—hair in place, necktie straight, makeup not over done, clothes well-pressed, etc.

When the first look is done and after going through a whole how-do-I-look checklist, you make a general sweep, right?

What if the second look has more depth, more intent than just looking at the physical?

Studies show that external changes only happen when you make internal changes. You have to do some internal housekeeping if you want the façade of your house to look good.

Keeping house

Weight loss, trimmed waistline, better complexion, etc. are all wonderful side effects of a healthy lifestyle.

Among the steps you can take to achieve these include inner cleansing, exercise, nutritious eating regimen, vitamin-mineral supplementation and a positive loving attitude.

Habits that are in direct conflict with your new health plan should be addressed.

If you have cravings you cannot seem to ignore, the objects of these cravings may need replacing, removing or managing.

They may be chocolates/sugar, salt, fatty meats, snack items like popcorn, chips and chicharon and other munchies, creamy/cheesy foods or alcohol.

Moderation is good. Bingeing is bad.

To-do list

- Eat less of everything except vegetables. The answer is not starvation or deprivation but moderation. You will soon feel the effects of cutting back on quantities because quality is what you will get.

- Start an exercise program. Brisk walking, spinning/biking or dancing, take your pick. But start today.

- Change your "there's always tomorrow attitude" to "there's only today." And, with this, you are well on your way.

- Replace the old with the new. By adopting a philosophy of newness, you will soon erase the old you, including old lifestyles, old views, old fears, old problems.

- Think young. When you see yourself as someone young, your outlook will become young as well.

Never more will you say to yourself "I'm too old for that." Deepak Chopra, M.D., repeatedly says in "Ageless Body Timeless Mind" that your mind's paradigm shifts once you say you will be young always. The attitude directly affects your body's mechanism, making it operate as it once did in your youth. So, think young to become young.

Go light

Here is a nutritious meal plan guaranteed to keep the waistline trim, according

to Michael Perricone, M.D., in "The Wrinkle Cure."

Breakfast: two scrambled egg whites, 2-oz serving non-instant oatmeal, fresh strawberries

Lunch: 4-oz fish, fresh green salad with tomatoes, red bell pepper, onions, olive oil dressing, grilled salmon

Dinner: broiled chicken, fresh broccoli/cabbage, garbanzo beans

Snack: low-fat cottage cheese, one apple

Avoid if you can, for now, white rice/flour, pancakes, popcorn, potatoes (especially French fries), corn, peas and carrots as they elevate the blood pressure.

If you cannot avoid these, combine with complex carbohydrates like squash, green beans, eggplant, cauliflower and fruits such

as apples, honeydew melon, berries (strawberries, blueberry, raspberry), kiwi.

Other meats you can have are turkey, chicken, lean beef/ham/pork.

For fish, alternates are tuna, salmon, snapper (lapu-lapu), cod, etc.

When in doubt, use olive oil or rice bran oil. Studies have shown that coconut oil and virgin coco oil have health benefits.

Holiday scrub

Use one capsule or tablet of Vitamin C, one capsule of Vitamin E and mix with freshly mashed apples (red or green). Rub throughout your body and face, avoiding the eye area.

Affirm: "I deserve the best therefore, I claim a new me."

Love and light!

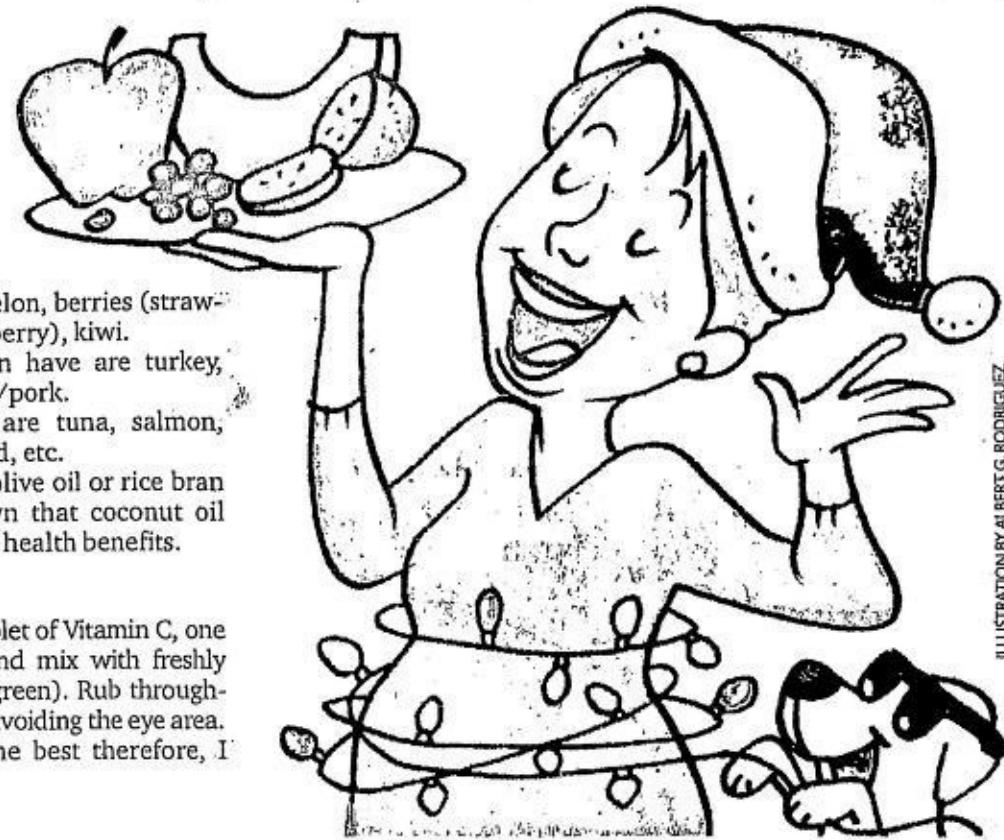
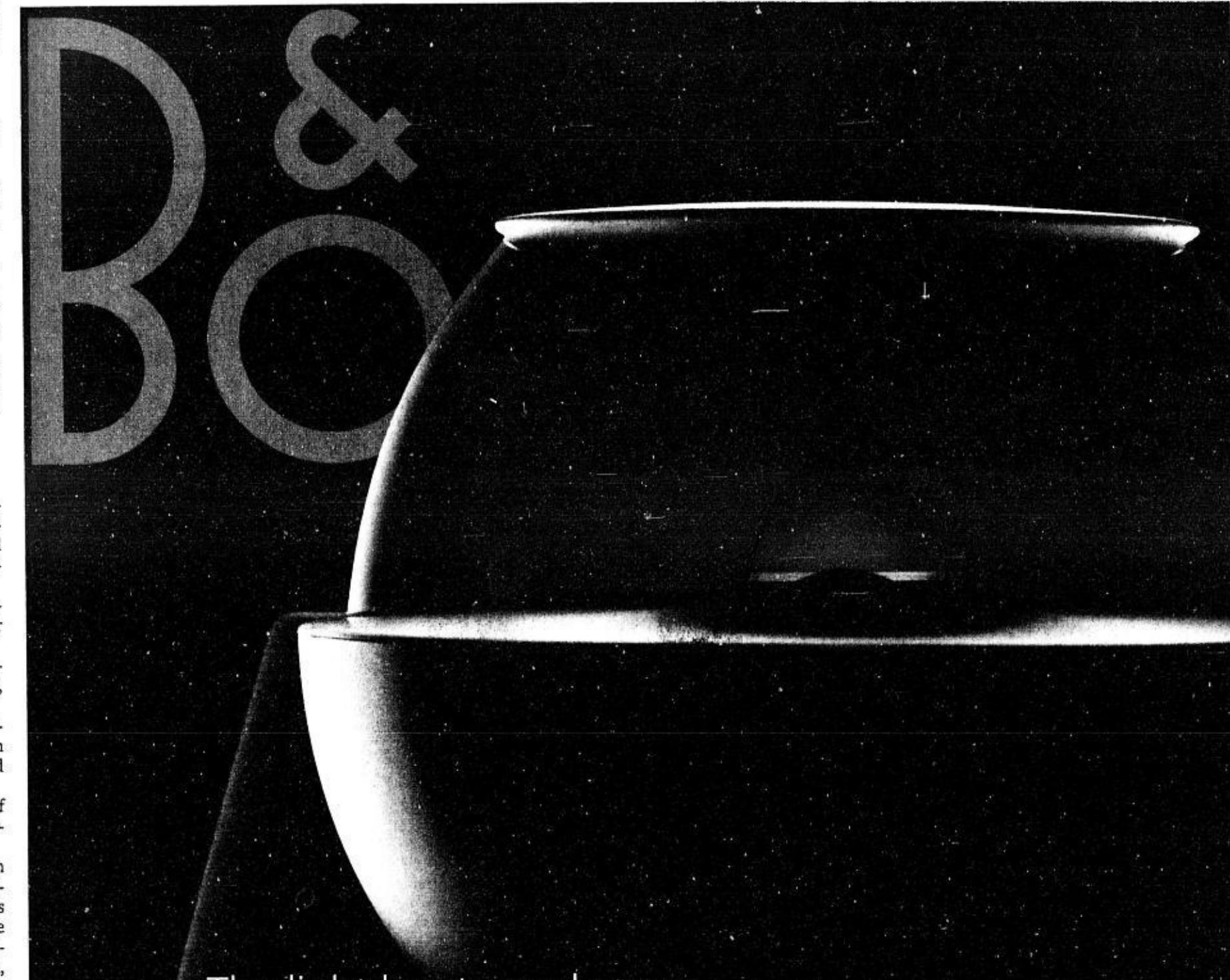


ILLUSTRATION BY ALBERT G. RODRIGUEZ



The light has turned green...

And we are pleased to open the doors to our new Bang & Olufsen store at the Ayala Center, Makati City.

Come and discover more about the exciting range of products that includes televisions, music systems and loudspeakers, and why not invite a friend or two to share in this inspiring experience.

We look forward to welcoming you into our new world.



Pop art for gift boxes

HEALTHY OPTIONS' GIFT-GIVING theme this year draws inspiration from pop art icon Andy Warhol.

Romy Sia, managing director, said Healthy Options' gift boxes would even make ideal year-round presents for people of all ages, interests and tastes.

The gift boxes use the silkscreen image of a tattooed biker from the "Eat Good, Live Bad Longer" advertising campaign that are likely to be appreciated long after the holiday season.

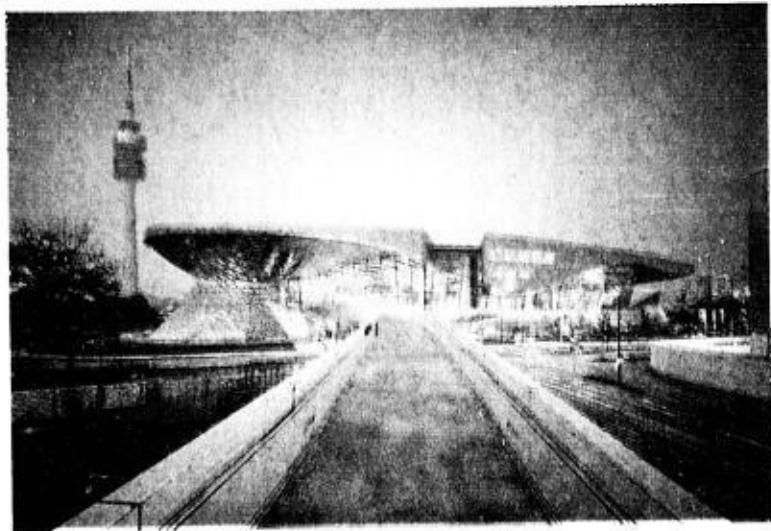
They come in various sizes and psychedelic colors, in keeping with the season's festive mood. Healthy Options also has gift cards in P200, P500 and P1,000 denominations. Healthy Options has branches in major malls.

B&O

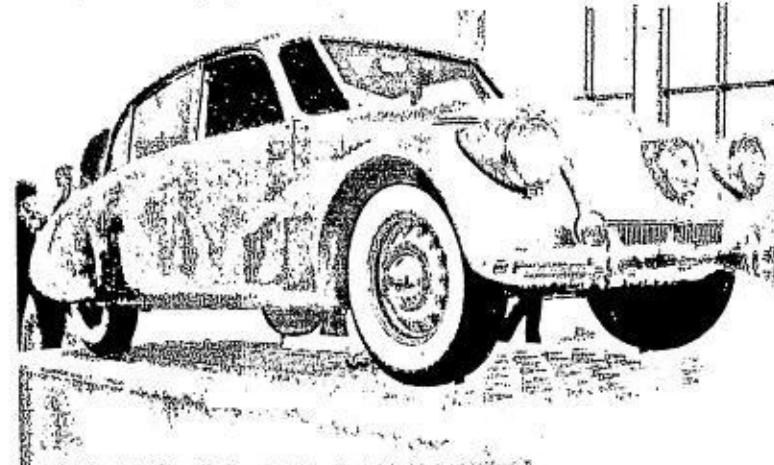
BANG & OLUFSEN

BANG & OLUFSEN, Level 1, Greenbelt 5, Ayala Center, Makati City, (632) 728-8766

www.bang-olufsen.com



SHOP, eat and enjoy before you pick up your BMW car and drive off.



ONE of the vintage cars inside the modern museum.



THE BIG TWO. Michael Kirsch, corporate affairs VP, Strategy Corp Messengers of BMW Group, and the brilliant architect of BMW Welt, professor Wolf D. Prix



DR. CORINNA Rösner, brilliant curator of Pinakothek modern museum



MOI in a Munich square

Three letters spell first-class products

Part 2



OLET Manalang, Career Smart general manager, and Jet Bije, Hunter Douglas Phils. sales director



GIGI Lapira, Hunter Douglas Phils. president



PAULINO Garcia, Ricco Renzo International Consolidated Inc. chair



BRILLIANT Armin Raquel Santos, Bureau of Investments vice governor



CONTRACTOR Jess Buenaventura and Kaye Nuguid, Ricco Renzo International manager

WE MOVED across the street from the BMW Welt to look at the new Production Mile at the BMW Plant, Munich.

We were amazed by the highest level of engineering and the true passion for the brand by the staff.

The one-hour tour of the awesome BMW plant was mind-blowing. And all these technologies in automobile production were just a street away from the gorgeous BMW Welt.

We went with total interest to the press shop, body shop, paint shop, engine production and all the way to the assembly line.

We also looked at the production of equipment and seats, as well as the testing of engine and speed when the car was fully assembled.

Truly awesome, dahlings.

That evening we had a great, relaxed dinner at a quaint but popular Italian restaurant close to the hotel, compliments of our friend and guardian angel, BMW's brilliant asset, Singapore-based Michael T.H. Lim, corporate affairs, Asia regional director. He excellently took care of us for four days.

We started our last day as BMW's invitees by visiting the BMW Group Designworks USA.

Giving us a special treat was the sophisticated, tres fashionable Verena Kloor, president of the company, no less, who happened to be in Munich although her home base is Los Angeles, California.

She personally gave us an insight into what her company was all about. At this year's international aircraft show of the National Business Aviation Association held in Atlanta, Georgia, United States, the BMW Group Designworks USA created quite a stir with its groundbreaking design of a medium-range aircraft.

It was built by one of the world's largest aircraft builders, the Brazilian company Embraer.

Designworks USA, based in Los Angeles, with offices in Munich and Singapore, operates as a subsidiary. It has a cross industry expertise in, take note,

WITHOUT BATTING AN EYELASH

Maurice Arcache
Photos by Alex Van Hagen using Kodak EasyShare system

design strategy, design research, brand communication, colors and finish product development.

Their clients include tons of leading companies—from transportation to lifestyle industry, plus, plus.

After Designworks USA, we had a great lunch at the renowned Restaurant Lembach. Our last stop was the must-go-to Pinakothek der Moderne, a mind-blowing modern museum.

You will certainly be amazed by the awesome collection of modern conceptualized objects from "all over Europe and hopefully India, Asia and Japan," said the amazing lady chief curator Dr. Corinna Rösner, as she showed us around.

Once the tour was over, all 580 invited journalists agreed on one thing—that BMW's three letters stood for a powerful brand and first-class products.

BMW cars are more than just a classy means of transportation. They are really the expression of the owner's personality, dahlings.

It was for us a truly wonderful experience to remember courtesy of our host, BMW.

Window fashions gallery

Après the bombardment of invites for openings or launching of products or new restos, it was a welcome breather to get invited to the opening of the latest window fashions gallery at Ricco Renzo Caffe and Galleries of Hunter Douglas, which just happens to be the world leader in window fashions, palanggas.

Welcoming the mob of invitees that included top architects, interior designers and art connoisseurs, was the tres charmant Jim Tan, Hunter Douglas regional director for Asia.

After all the socializing, drink-

ing and digging into excellently prepared heavy cocktail food, Jim T. gave a short speech:

"Ricco Renzo has distinguished itself for successfully fusing art and business, very much the same way Hunter Douglas has successfully fused aesthetics and quality in its products. Ricco Renzo fits perfectly the partner profile that Hunter Douglas is looking for."

For its part, Ricco Renzo chair and president Paulino Garcia Jr. said, "We are honored to be its (Hunter Douglas) partner."

A raffle gave away such prizes as an awesome living room window fashion showcase from Hunter Douglas and paintings from Ricco Renzo, no less.

Moi learned that Hunter Douglas products were found in millions of homes and commercial buildings worldwide. It is the world market leader in window coverings and a major provider of architectural products, *palanggas*.

It has 21,000 employees in 168 offices.

Check out Hunter Douglas Window Fashions Gallery, *palanggas*, on the second floor of Ricco Renzo Caffe and Galleries. You will find its latest products, including the 3form Varia.

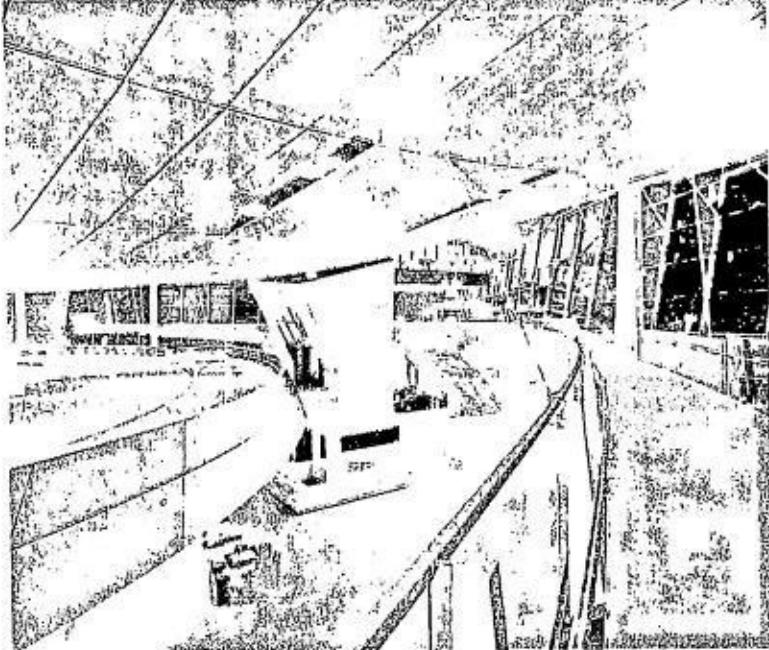
Basi Revolt

Everything is set for the grand celebration of the 200th anniversary of the Basi Revolt, *palanggas*.

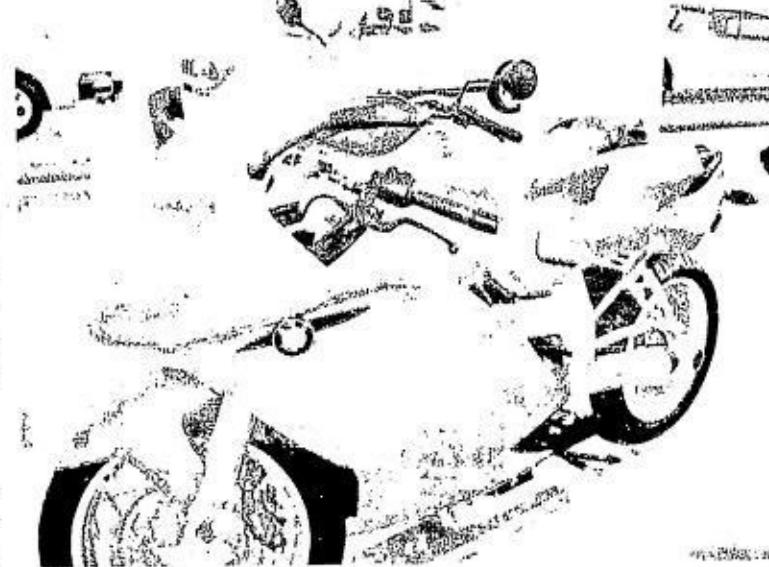
No less than the popular, articulate Rep. Ferdinand "Bongbong" R. Marcos Jr. is hosting this happening at 6 p.m., Dec. 6, at the Museum of the Filipino People, South Wing Gallery, Teodoro Valencia Circle, Rizal Park.

To know more about the historical event, dahlings, check out the fantastic work of Esteban Villanueva, a merchant and self-taught painter. He was commissioned in 1821 to chronicle the events of the revolt in 14 panels that retold the story of the revolt, from the formation of the contending forces to the defeat of the rebels."

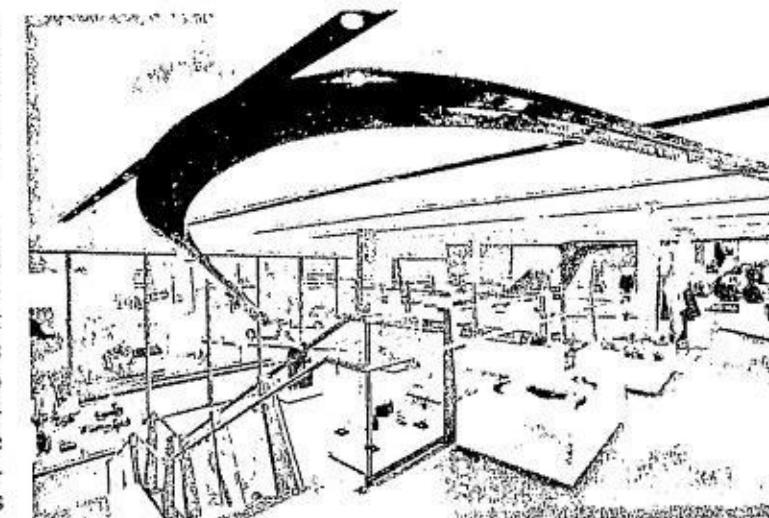
On exhibit in the museum until Dec. 14, the work interacts with two large murals plus other works by Roberto Feleo, who was inspired by the Basi Revolt paintings, *palanggas*.



AVANT-GARDE driveway



VINTAGE leather BMW motorcycle



MINIMALIST design of the boutique's second floor



ERRATA

In one of the photos in Friday's column, Pepper Teehankee was inadvertently identified as an Indonesian journalist. The name of the freelance writer is Yong Shu Chiang, not Ong Shu Chiang. The caption should have read: "Farewell dinner with other journalists from Asia. Pepper Teehankee, an Indonesian journalist, freelance writer Yong Shu Chiang, Wealth Magazine Singapore editor Kannan Chandran, Michael Lim and moi." In the same issue, the text should have read "Professor Wolf D. Prix (instead of Wolf D. Prix), the brain behind the architectural wonder that's the BMW Welt..."



JIM TAN, regional director for Asia Window Fashions division, and woman of substance Reese Ferrer, Ricco Renzo International director



REP. Bongbong Marcos hosts the 200th anniversary of the Basi Revolt.

INNER AWARENESS
Jaime Licauco

Look good this Christmas

THE ACRONYM AWSM STANDS FOR Aesthetic, Weight and Skin Management.

It refers to the services patients who want to improve their looks and feel good can receive from the St. Luke's Medical Center's three Centers of Excellence.

The centers involved in AWSM are dermatology headed by Dr. Lonabel Encarnacion, aesthetic surgery headed by Dr. René Valerio, and obesity and weight management under Dr. Luisito Llido.

The DermCen treats skin problems and serious conditions that require utmost medical attention.

It provides patients with services ranging from acne treatment to body sculpting to skin-cancer management. State-of-the-art technology is used by internationally trained experts.

People who want to look their best for the

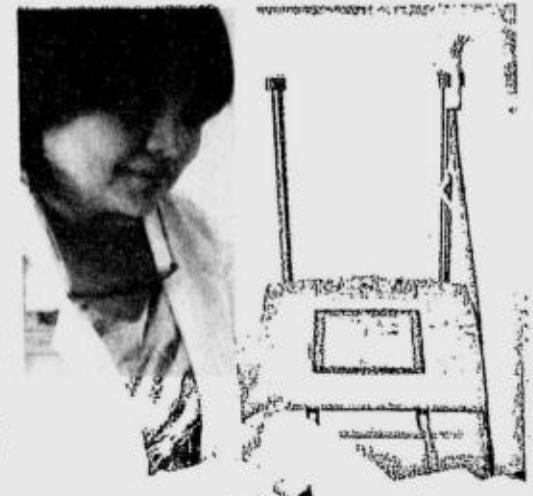
Christmas holidays or any day of the year, DermCen recently acquired the Tenor RF for body contouring and skincare.

Approved by the United States Food and Drug Administration, energy-based Tenor RF has three capabilities: Unipolar RF to re-contour body size, Bipolar RF to tighten skin, and RF Pixel to refine skin texture and minimize scars.

As introductory promo, patients get a 50-percent discount on their fourth Tenor RF session. Offer is available until Dec. 31.

BPI, Security Bank and Diner's Club International cardholders can avail of three to six months deferred payment plans at zero interest.

The AWSM Centers are on 12/F Cathedral Heights Building Complex, St. Luke's Medical Center. Call 7230101/0301 ext. 5208, 5207, 5209.



DERMCEN head Dr. Lonabel A. Encarnacion uses RF Pixel to refine facial skin texture.

Beyond the secret Law of Attraction

Part 1

EVERYONE WANTS to be in on a secret, no matter what it is. We want to feel we are in the know. We do not want to feel left out.

And that's how Rhonda Byrne, an Australian divorcee and former television producer, became a multimillionaire almost overnight. Her life was in shambles until she wrote a book about a long-known principle or philosophy she called "The Secret."

According to a Newsweek report, the book sold 1.5 million while the DVD version 1.7 million copies in three months. It became a phenomenal best-seller in the United States, United Kingdom and Australia.

Even in the Philippines, where the average population is not known to be avid book readers, "The Secret" did quite well. People bought copies for themselves and as gifts to friends and relatives.

Is the book really worth its price, containing substantial information, or is it just a product of good marketing strategy?

Going over the book that a friend gave me, I found nothing that is really new or that I did not know before. The book talks mainly about the Law of Attraction, which is only one of the four hidden laws of nature.

Calling it "The Secret" was a stroke of marketing genius. And showing people how the secret works in daily life insured its success with a reading public always hungry for something new and practical.

The following passage in the book's foreword proved irresistible:

"A year ago, my life had collapsed around me. I'd worked myself into exhaustion, my father died suddenly, and my relationship with my colleagues and loved ones were in turmoil. Little did I know at the time, out of my greatest despair was to come the greatest gift."

"I'd been given a glimpse of a Great Secret—The Secret to life. The glimpse came in a hundred-year-old book, given to me by my daughter ("The Science of Getting Rich"—written by Wallace Wattles in 1910). I began

tracing The Secret back through history. I couldn't believe all the people who knew this. They were the greatest people in history: Plato, Shakespeare, Newton, Hugo, Beethoven, Lincoln, Emerson, Edison, Einstein.

"Incredulous, I asked, 'why doesn't everyone know this?' A burning desire to share The Secret with the world consumed me, and I began searching for people alive today who knew The Secret."

If you want to be loved, be lovable; if you want to be prosperous, think of prosperity

According to her, "People who have drawn wealth into their lives used The Secret, whether consciously or unconsciously. They think thoughts of abundance and wealth, and they do not allow any contradictory thoughts to take root in their minds. Their predominant thoughts are of wealth. They only know wealth, and nothing else exists in their minds. Whether they are aware of it or not, their predominant thoughts of wealth are what brought wealth to them. It is the law of attraction in action."

The Law of Attraction works in all aspects of our life, including our spiritual life.

Unfortunately, the book focuses mainly on attracting riches and wealth, which is what most people want to hear about and that is why the book has become so successful. Who does not want to be rich?

But there are other equally important hidden laws of nature that the book fails to mention or emphasize such as the Law of Affirmation or Suggestion, the Law of Compensation and the Law of Causality.

Nevertheless, I must credit Byrne and congratulate her for bringing to a large number of people around the world the tremendous powers of human thought and emotion.

I have been teaching this in my inner-mind development seminars in the Philippines for the last 25 years. With her book, the same teaching has reached a wider audience.

In my seminar, I define the Law of Attraction as "like attracts like." We attract what we are, or what we think we are. If you want to be loved, you must be lovable; if you want to be happy, you must think of happiness; if you want to be prosperous, you must think of prosperity.

That is exactly what Byrne is saying in "The Secret."

MEDICard, The Healthcare You Deserve!

What is Asthma and what triggers it?

Asthma is a chronic lung disease characterized by inflammation of the airways. The inflammation makes the passages smaller, making it more difficult for air to move in and out of the lung, causing symptoms such as cough, chest tightness, shortness of breath and wheezing. Asthma triggers include allergic rhinitis and exposure to allergens including dust mites, pollens, animal dander and cockroach droppings. Inflamed asthmatic airways are sensitive to environmental irritants such as cigarette smoke, strong perfumes, household cleaners, and car fumes. There is much evidence reporting increased incidence of asthma in children exposed to smoke. Viral infections like colds, changing weather conditions, changes in temperature and humidity, emotional anxiety, and gastroesophageal reflux can also aggravate asthma. Asthma triggers may differ from person to person, therefore identifying and avoiding these triggers can help lessen the chance of having an asthma attack.



Immunology Despite being active in her profession, Dr. De Vera, a medicine graduate of UP, took her residency training for pediatrics in 1999 and later had her sub-specialization in Allergy and Immunology at Rush University Medical Center in Chicago, Illinois. She is a fellow of the American Academy of Allergy, Asthma and Immunology, and also a diplomate of the Philippine Pediatric Society and the Philippine Society of Allergy, Asthma and Immunology.

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Take Charge Doc!



Nicky

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Your Doctor Knows Best

Ruby T. Go MD, FPSEM

Question:

Diabetes seems to run in my family. My parents and other relatives have diabetes. I am aware that I have a big chance of having it as well. What are the common symptoms that I should watch out for?

Doctor Says...

Diabetes Mellitus (DM) is a serious chronic metabolic disease characterized by an increase in blood sugar level. This happens when the pancreas cannot produce sufficient amount of insulin (a hormone that promotes the utilization of sugar in the body) or when the body cannot properly use insulin.

Globally, the number of people affected by diabetes has reached alarming levels and has been continuously increasing through the years. In the Philippines, it is estimated that about 12 million Filipinos have diabetes, of which half are undiagnosed. If the trend will not dramatically change, diabetes will be affecting 15 million Filipinos by 2010.

DM can be classified as Type 1 or Type 2, depending on the cause of increased blood sugar. In Type 1 DM, there is destruction of cells in the pancreas that produce insulin, while Type 2 results from defects in insulin action or secretion. The classic symptoms of diabetes include polyuria (frequent urination), polydipsia (increased thirst and consequent fluid intake) and polyphagia (increased appetite). Symptoms may develop quite rapidly (weeks or months) in Type 1 DM, which is more common in children. However, in Type 2 DM, the symptoms develop more slowly and may be subtle or completely absent. Type 1 DM may also cause weight loss (despite normal or increased eating) and generalized fatigue. These symptoms can also manifest in those with Type 2 DM if blood sugar is poorly controlled.

Please note that both Type 1 and Type 2 DM are partly inherited. Genetics play a role but environmental triggers are still needed for DM to fully develop. These triggers may be in certain forms of infection for Type 1 DM or risk factors such as hypertension, high bad cholesterol, obesity or habitual physical inactivity for Type 2 DM. Type 1 DM develops during childhood or adolescence and affects about 10% of all patients with diabetes. This type of diabetes is also called insulin

dependent diabetes because lifetime of insulin injection is needed for survival since the pancreas is unable to produce insulin. On the other hand, Type 2 DM or non-insulin dependent diabetes affects about 90% of those with diabetes with overweight or obesity as a common risk factor. This type of diabetes frequently goes undiagnosed for many years. This is because hyperglycemia or high blood sugar develops gradually, thus the symptoms usually go unnoticed.

Undiagnosed and poorly managed DM can lead to various complications. Long-term exposure to high blood sugar levels can cause damage and failure of certain organ functions. Common complications include blindness, kidney failure, stroke, heart attack, wounds that would not heal leading to amputations and impotence. These complications may be prevented with proper management of the condition.

Maintaining a healthy lifestyle – proper diet, weight loss, regular exercise, cessation from smoking and moderate alcoholic drinking, is the key in delaying (for high-risk individuals) or controlling the disease. Appropriate or therapeutic lifestyle changes coupled with pharmacotherapy and patient education and counseling are required to manage diabetes. Good blood sugar control will enable a person with diabetes live a normal life. If you have relatives with DM, overweight or obese, or has high blood cholesterol and blood pressure levels, it is best to consult with your doctor for proper guidance, diagnosis and management of your condition.

Dra. Go is an endocrinologist. She holds clinic at Manila Doctor's Hospital, Cardinal Santos Medical Center and Chinese General Hospital. She is the president of the Philippine Lipid and Atherosclerosis Society, and past president of the Philippine Diabetes Association, Inc., and Philippine Society of Endocrinology and Metabolism.

This column is supported by AstraZeneca Philippines as part of its disease awareness campaign. This is not intended to replace the advice of a healthcare professional. Always consult your doctor.

AstraZeneca
cares

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Weight loss solutions that last

(Part 1)

By Mitch Felipe
Contributor

MOST PROBABLY, YOU assume you have tried everything to get the body that you want.

But you often get discouraged because, after all the effort, either you find it difficult to stick to a program, unable to get the results you want, or you still face the same issues after all your hard work.

The following are solutions you can apply to common challenges that delay or hinder long-lasting weight loss:

Get educated to get results.

If you get results, you become more motivated to exercise and become more mindful of what you eat. But if you fail, your enthusiasm weakens.

You cannot be blamed for thinking about the easiest weight-loss solutions after numerous attempts. Quick fix strategies like diet pills or fasting will give you temporary results but they will not guarantee weight maintenance, which is more essential.

The key to a lasting outcome is knowledge and awareness of the whole process.

Analyze yourself and your progress then identify the areas where you need help. It could be exercise, food planning, motivation or attitude.

Consult professionals and learn strategies and ways to implement them effectively. This will save you time and energy trying to find out about a wide



ILLUSTRATION BY STEPH BRAVO

range of approaches. It will also prevent injuries or any harmful effects of unsupervised exercise and diet programs.

Get a coach to guide and educate you on how to do things safely on your own. Eileen Lorenzo, dentist, tried almost all strategies available only to regain the weight she lost.

Finally, she got a weight-loss coach and lost 60 pounds. She says, "Getting out of your comfort zone is scary at first, but a weight manager definitely made the road to fitness smoother."

Apply a flexible eating approach.

Why do most diets fail?

If a diet is not followed, you feel lack of control and tend to abandon it. Let us say you had three pieces of chocolates, instead of one, from a box. You say, "Since I broke my diet, I may as well finish the whole box."

I often hear stories like this from people who tried various diets for years, only to discover that creating their own meal plans is the start of a victorious weight loss journey.

Being in charge of your food intake, deciding for instance when to have the once-a-week chocolate dessert, removes restrictions that might lead to loss of control and deprivation.

A recent comprehensive analysis of 31 long-term diet studies published in American Psychologist shows that people on diets typically lose 5-10 percent of their starting weight in the first six months. After four or five years, majority put on more weight than they lost.

According to James Rippe, author of "Weight Loss that Lasts: Break through the 10 Big Diet Myths," people who meticulously count every calorie and read every food label have high levels of dietary restraint associated with unsuccessful weight loss attempts.

This cannot be sustained for long periods of time and, eventually, it will be abandoned and overeating occurs.

Create your own daily food plan that matches your way of living. It should include strategies like when to shop for healthier foods, how to prepare a low-calorie version of your fa-

vorite foods. You should think of ways to replace junk foods at home with nutritious but tasty snacks.

Focus on living, not losing. May be you have already achieved your target weight and you ask yourself, "Now that I've lost weight, then what?"

It is not how much and how fast you have lost weight that counts, but how much you have learned from your experiences and how much more improvement you can attain during your lifetime.

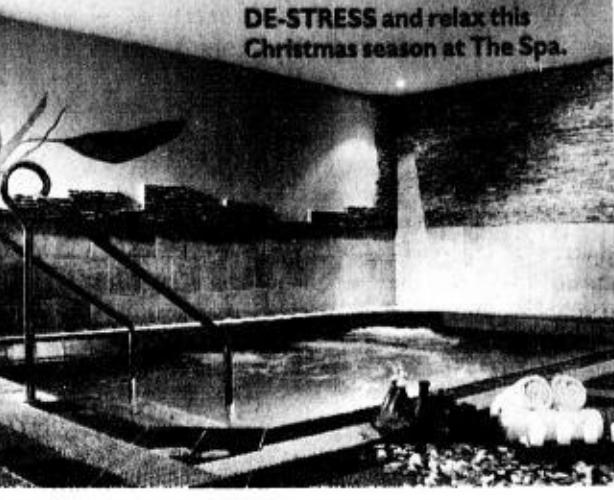
Chris Juan, managing director of a retreat house, lost 30 pounds last year and then regained 15 pounds this year.

During the initial stage of his weight-loss program, Chris admitted he was motivated by the desire to lose weight and improve his appearance. After losing 30 pounds, he felt relaxed for a while and got busy.

He often made his job an excuse to delay exercise. He ate fatty foods as a way to relieve stress. In the latter part of this year, he made an effort to explore a different type of motivation so he can stick to his exercise program again and modify his eating habits.

"My goal right now is not to achieve a six-pack abs anymore, but to keep on improving my fitness level to be able to join a marathon next year." The moment he decided to achieve a long-term, performance-based goal, he started to lose the weight he regained.

For comments or questions e-mail the author at mitchfelipe@gmail.com



DE-STRESS and relax this Christmas season at The Spa.

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Check out The Spa's gift suggestions that will help your friends and loved ones de-stress and relax this season.

The Spa's Wellness Gift Cards are as good as cash at any branch. Available in denominations of P1,000, P1,500, and P2,000, the Wellness Gift Cards come in fancy packaging.

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The Spa's bestselling services include the Volcanic Rock Massage, Honey Body Polish, Javanese Royal Bath, and Coffee Rub.

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When you avail of the Earthly Passion package, you get one free P1,000 Wellness Gift Card. This offer is available until Dec. 31.

The Spa has also bundled a

set of gift items that feature products with internationally-renowned brands like Babo, Phyto, Decleor and The Natural Source. Each gift bundle comes with a free price-off voucher!

The Spa (www.thespaph.com.ph) has branches in Acropolis (642-2848), Alabang (850-3490), Bel-Air (895-5858), Greenbelt (840-1325), The Podium (638-8388).

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Guests will be provided sanitized bathrobes, towels, shorts and slippers (047) 252-6088. Ritz Spa Malate is a one-stop place for total relaxation of mind and body at 1614 M. Adriatico St., Malate, Manila; 523-3333.

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appetite. Propolis Facial Soap has anti-bacterial, anti-microbial and

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propolis and tea tree oil. Gano Gold Coffee is a special 4-in-1 coffee

with Ganoderma (also known as lingzhi). You get a free gift when you

buy a Christmas Gift Pack. Nex Temp is a credit card type, handy

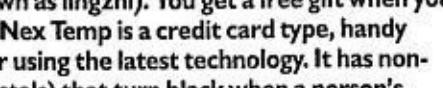
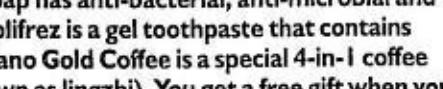
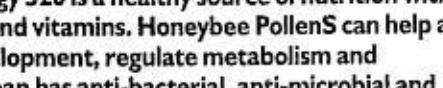
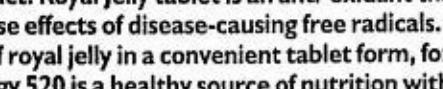
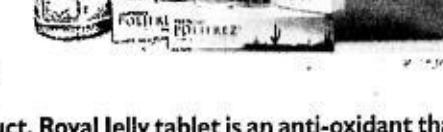
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GALLERIA

1 HITMAN • THX 1:40 3:40 5:40 7:40 9:40	6 ENCHANTED 12:00 2:30 5:00 7:30 10:00
2 MR. MAGORIUM'S WONDER EMPORIUM 7 PASUKOB 1:15 3:25 5:35 7:45 10:00	8 ANIMAHENASYON: ANIMATION FESTIVAL 1:00 2:30 4:00 5:30 7:00
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5 THE KINGDOM 12:20 2:45 5:10 7:35 10:00	



FOR MORE INFO
PLEASE CONTACT:
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Tel: 438-2983 to 85
LOCAL 151/150

ERMITA

1 PASUKOB 11:10 1:20 3:30 5:40 7:50 10:00	6 ONE MORE CHANCE 12:30 2:50 5:10 7:30 10:00
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1 THE KINGDOM 2 PASUKOB 3 ENCHANTED	4 ONE MORE CHANCE 5 FRED CLAUS 8 MR. MAGORIUM's WONDER EMPORIUM
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PIONEER

1 MR. MAGORIUM's WONDER EMPORIUM 2 THE KINGDOM	3 PASUKOB 4 ENCHANTED
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STA. ROSA

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1 MR. MAGORIUM's WONDER EMPORIUM 2 ONE MORE CHANCE 3 ENCHANTED 4 PASUKOB	1 BEOWULF 2 PASUKOB 3 ENCHANTED 4 ONE MORE CHANCE
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DASMARINAS

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1 ENCHANTED 2 THE KINGDOM 3 ONE MORE CHANCE 4 PASUKOB	1 FRED CLAUS 2 THE KINGDOM 3 MR. MAGORIUM's WONDER EMPORIUM 4 PASUKOB
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ANGELES

Ticket Price: P90 / P95 (045) 892-2348	TARLAC
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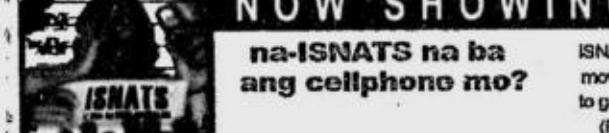
STARMILLS

1 ENCHANTED 2 HITMAN 3 ONE MORE CHANCE	4 PASUKOB 5 MR. MAGORIUM's WONDER EMPORIUM 6 LIONS FOR LAMBS
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1 30 DAYS OF NIGHT 2 ONE MORE CHANCE 3 indieSine: ISNATS 4 PASUKOB 5 ENCHANTED 6 beowulf	1 30 DAYS OF NIGHT 2 ONE MORE CHANCE 3 PASUKOB 4 LIONS FOR LAMB 5 ENCHANTED 6 BEOWULF
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NOW SHOWING
na-ISNATS na ba ang cellphone mo?

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SM CITY MARILAO 1 ONE MORE CHANCE

2 ENCHANTED

3 PASUKOB

4 THE GAMEPLAN

5 THE KINGDOM

6 ENCHANTED

7 ONE MORE CHANCE

8 THE GAMEPLAN

9 30 DAYS OF NIGHT

10 MONA SINGAPORE ESCORT

11 THE KINGDOM

12 MONA SINGAPORE ESCORT

13 BEOWULF

14 ENCHANTED

15 ONE MORE CHANCE

16 THE KINGDOM

17 PASUKOB

18 ONE MORE CHANCE

19 THE KINGDOM

20 ENCHANTED

21 BEOWULF

TUESDAY,
DECEMBER 4, 2007

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER ENTERTAINMENT D

LT, Rudy need not wait for next year

From Cora Hizon (pangili-nanadvocates@yahoo.com.ph), of Muntinlupa City:

I read the story about Lorna's promise to bring Rudy Fernandez to the St. Peregrine chapel in San Juan Capistrano, California. I am a member of the St. Peregrine healing ministry here in the Philippines. Please tell Lorna and Rudy that there is a St. Peregrine Parish Shrine on the National Road in Tunasan, Muntinlupa City (near the new SM Muntinlupa). On Sunday at 2 p.m., or every first Tuesday of the month at 6:30 p.m., a Healing Mass is celebrated in honor of St.

Peregrine.

Hurt by Star Cinema

From Kurt Perez (killer_smileguy@yahoo.com)

Gusto ko lang po i-share sa inyo ang napakalaking pasakit na ibintigay sa amin ng Star Cinema.

FEEDBACK

Nagkaroon ng auditions for the movie, "Sakal, Sakali, Saklo-lo." May nakuhang talent upang gumanap na anak ni Judy and Ryan. They met several times and asked the child to do tapings—so the parents had to cancel previous commitments and even school.

Then suddenly, a production staff member informed them that the child had been dropped from the project.

Taga-Laguna pa po ang bata, who is only 4 years old. Nakakaawa din 'yung mother na nangutang lang ng pamasahila. Witness ako nu'ng in-approve ng director and staff 'yung bata. Grabe.

Thanks

From Cristy Gozon (e-mail address withheld upon request):

Thanks for the article on the America. I've loved their songs since I was in high school.

Katrina...

From page D1

Kristine Hermosa. Will they finally admit the real score between them and make the fifth sequel "Oyo Ko, Kristine Ko (The Beginning of a Romance)?"

Vertical Horizon

Catch Vertical Horizon, the band behind the hits "Everything You Want" and "Best I Ever Had," at the Big Dome on Dec. 7. The group will be joined by Rivermaya with new vocalist Jayson Fernandez, and American stand-up comedian Jamie Kennedy. For tickets, call 911-5555. Let Vertical Horizon expand your musical horizons.

E-mail watering-holehangrila@yahoo.com.

Araneta Center **Gatetway** **AMMALL** **Farmers Plaza** **Farmers Market**

Gatetway Cineplex*10
EXPERIENCE THE DIFFERENCE

ADMIT ONE!

THE KINGDOM	FRED CLAUS	MR MAGORIUMS	PASUKOB
1:30 4:10 6:50 9:30	1:45 4:20 6:55 9:30	12:30 2:45 5:00 7:15 9:30	12:30 2:45 5:00 7:15 9:30
COMPLETELY UNOBSTRUCTED VIEWS			
BEOWULF	ENCHANTED	HITMAN	ONE MORE CHANCE
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ARANETA COLISEUM

AMERICA ALL MY LIFE PHILIPPINE TOUR 2007
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For reservations call 911-5555 or log on to ticketnet.com.ph, aranetalcoliseum.com or aranetacenter.net

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~ Ben Lyons / E!



AT THE CINEMAS

TEX

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Movie schedules may change without prior notice. For verification, please call 729-7777

GLORIETTA 1	1 BEOWULF	2 THE KINGDOM	3 PASUKOB	4 ONE MORE CHANCE
GLORIETTA 4	1 ENCHANTED	2 HITMAN	3 THE KINGDOM	
	4 THE NAMESAKE	5 FRED CLAUS	6 MR. MAGORIUM'S WONDER EMPORIUM	7 ONE MORE CHANCE
GREENBELT 1	1 PASUKOB	2 THE KINGDOM		
GREENBELT 3	1 MR. MAGORIUM'S WONDER EMPORIUM	2 THE KINGDOM		
ALABANG TOWN CENTER	1 THE KINGDOM	2 FRED CLAUS		
AYALA CENTER CEBU	3 MR. MAGORIUM'S WONDER EMPORIUM	4 PASUKOB	5 ENCHANTED	
MARKE! MARKET!	1 PASUKOB	2 FRED CLAUS		
TRINOMA	3 MR. MAGORIUM'S WONDER EMPORIUM	4 THE KINGDOM	5 ONE MORE CHANCE	
	1 PASUKOB	2 ONE MORE CHANCE	3 MR. MAGORIUM'S WONDER EMPORIUM	4 FRED CLAUS
	5 HITMAN	6 ENCHANTED	7 THE KINGDOM	

AT THE MALLS

CONCIERGE HOTLINE NUMBERS:

Glorietta - 752 7272

Greenbelt - 757 4853 to 54

Market! Market! - 886 7519

TriNoma - 901 3000

Ayala

Philippine Madrigal Singers
with Robert Seña and Isay Alvarez

December 8; 6pm; Glorietta 4 Park

The Dawn Jazz Nights
December 5; 7:30pm; Greenbelt 2 Al Fresco Area

ALABANG TOWN CENTER
Christmas Cantata Series Featuring Church of the Savior
December 4; 6pm; Town Plaza

AYALA CENTER CEBU
FREE Christmas Gift Bag for every P500 worth of purchase.
See leaflets for details. Per DTI-Cebu Permit No. 584, Series of 2007
December 1 to 31

MARTIN NIEVERA LIVE! The Milestones Album Promo Tour
December 4; 6pm; Activity Center

Repertory Philippines presents FIDDLER ON THE ROOF
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For inquiries, pls. call 887-0710
or visit www.repertory-philippines.com

Ayala MUSEUM
WATER: THE MEDIUM by Juvenal Sanso
November 24 to January 13, 2008; Ground Floor Gallery
For more info, pls. call 757-7117 to 21 loc. 14 or email museum_inquiry@ayalamuseum.org

SEUSSICAL THE MUSICAL:
The Cat in the Hat Live Show
December 1 and 2; 11:30am, 3pm and 6pm; TriNoma Activity Center

Rhythm Academy: Sam Concepcion with the Augustinian Larks
December 9; 6pm; Activity Center



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D4

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

COMICRelief

e-mail feedback at arts@inquirer.com.ph

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 4, 2007

BY JESS ABRERA

A diario novela by CARLO J. CAPARAS

To have to hold

Art: ARNELA A. AVETRIA



ATOMO AND WEBBOY



BY LYRA GARCCELLANO

A. LIPIN



PUGAD BABOY



BY P.M. JUNIOR

GARFIELD



BY JIM DAVIS

BABY BLUES



BY JERRY SCOTT

LOVEKNOTS



BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO

KIKO MACHINE



BY MANIX ABRERA BEN

BEN



BY DANIEL SHELTON

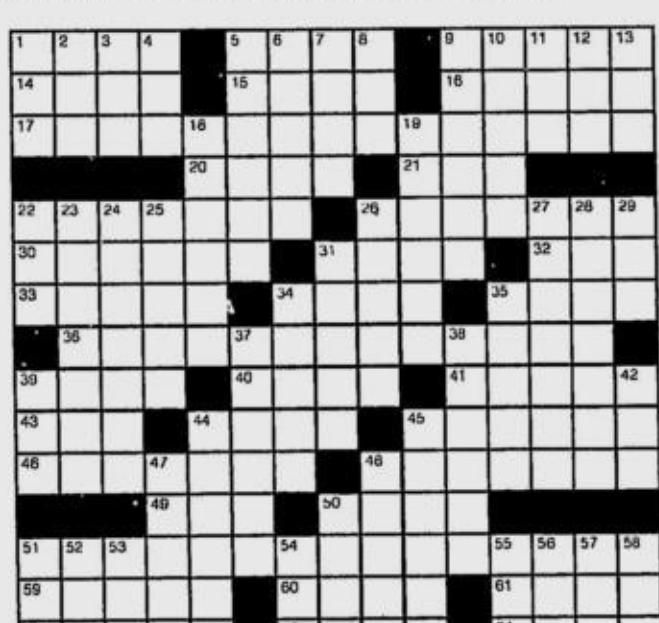
DAILY CROSSWORD

HOROSCOPE

CONCEPTIS SU DOKU

ACROSS

- 1 Laughingstock
5 English bloke
9 Select few
14 NASCAR word
15 Hole up
16 Fills completely
17 Encroaches upon
20 Gluttons
21 _de-dah
22 Loving squeeze
26 Gives the sack
30 Self-defense art
31 Small swallows
32 Actor Kilmer
33 Crumble away
34 Old Testament prophet
35 Lima location
36 Coerces
39 Japanese soup
40 Acts on a preference
41 Fine-feathered duck
43 Hydrogen's number
44 Creamy white cheese
45 Term of office
46 Musical note
48 Female greeter
49 Sympathetic attention
50 Tiniest bit
51 Gives a mild rebuke
59 Gas stove light
60 Styptic substance
61 Canyon sound
62 Irish poet of note
63 "Slippery" shade trees
64 Podiatrist's concern



YOU BORN TODAY: You're very gutsy and aggressive. You have a natural enthusiasm for life. People feel charged up when they're around you. You're not afraid of conflict, although you don't seek it out. You're quick (and accurate) to size up people and situations. Get ready for a fantastic year ahead. It might be one of the best years of your life!

Birthday of: Marisa Tomei, actress; Jeff Bridges, actor; Tyra Banks, supermodel.

ARIES (March 21 to April 19):

This is an excellent day to talk to partners and close friends. You feel unusually sympathetic to what others have to say. You find it quite easy to put yourself in someone else's shoes.

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20): Co-workers are sympathetic and helpful today. Conversely, you also are helpful to them. This is a good time to sit down together and figure out how you might want to approach something on the job.

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20): Today, it's very easy to get in touch with your muse or whatever inspires you. That's why it's a great day for creative activities, arts and crafts, and playful activities with children.

CANCER (June 21 to July 22): Domestic conversations will go well today, especially exchanges with parents and family members. People feel kind and sympathetic toward each other today.

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22): Your imagination is in overdrive today! Don't be surprised if you spend a fair amount of time daydreaming or wool-gathering. (Don't worry; it's important to do this sometimes.)

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18): Your appreciation of beauty is aroused today. Try to go someplace where you can see beautiful things—museums, galleries, boutiques, parks or whatever pleases you.

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20): You feel selfless today because your feelings of compassion are aroused by the suffering of others. You're willing to put the needs of others before your own. If you can help someone, you certainly will.

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22):

This is a pleasant, easygoing day. You feel open-hearted to everyone. Enjoy schmoozing with friends. Set aside some time for socializing.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21): Solitude in beautiful surroundings might please you today. You need a little privacy. Partly you're day-dreaming, and partly you want some peace and quiet.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21): A friend might need to confide in you today. Or perhaps you need to confide in someone else. Conversations with others are heartfelt and very frank.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19): Authority figures (boss, parent, teacher or even the police) might be sympathetic to you today. You feel that someone understands your needs and is willing to help you.

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22): Your imagination is in overdrive today! Don't be surprised if you spend a fair amount of time daydreaming or wool-gathering. (Don't worry; it's important to do this sometimes.)

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18): Your appreciation of beauty is aroused today. Try to go someplace where you can see beautiful things—museums, galleries, boutiques, parks or whatever pleases you.

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20): You feel selfless today because your feelings of compassion are aroused by the suffering of others. You're willing to put the needs of others before your own. If you can help someone, you certainly will.

Conceptis Sudoku

By Dave Green

			8	4	6	2		
6	5							
2	8						5	9
8	7		2	3				
							7	8
							5	1
4	9	6					1	8
							7	5
8	1	9	7					

Difficulty Level ★★

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Answer to previous puzzle

8	4	5	6	1	9	3	2	7
6	2	1	8	3	7	5	9	4
7	9	3	5	2	4	1	8	6
5	6	2	4	9	3	7	1	8
3	1	8	7	5	6	9	4	2
9	7	4	1	8	2	6	5	3
2	8	7	9	6	5	4	3	1
4	3	9	2	7	1	8	6	5
1	5	6	3	4	8	2	7	9

Difficulty Level ★

HOW TO PLAY SU DOKU

Fill the grid so that every column, every row and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9.

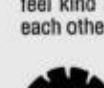
Tips and program at www.sudoku.com



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9	Some test segments		ASTI	X OUT	Y PRES
10	Latticework strips		NAAN	ETTE	MEETS
11	Figure skater Midori		FIRE	INSURANCE	
12	Links starting place		FREAK	EGO ZOE	
13	Slalom trail		RED	BLOOD	CELL
14	Upsurges		ACC	ACRE	YOWLS
15	Slip away		SHOT	ARABS	MAIA
16	Supplement, with out		SUSHI	FAKE	YES
17	Cocktail favorite		ARMY	NAVY	GAME
18	Window-shopped		DLI	GRE	EASYA
19	Boom box		CARTA	JOEY	TAUS
20	Pride members		OMANI	AGAR	LUNE
21	Late		SPYON	YODE	ANTS

Monday's Puzzle Solved
BUST O POTS H O B B S
ASTI X OUT Y PRES
NAAN E TTE MEETS
FIRE INSURANCE
FREAK EGO ZOE
RED BLOOD CELL
ACC ACRE YOWLS
SHOT ARABS MAIA
SUSHI FAKE YES
ARMY NAVY GAME
DLI GRE EASYA
CARTA JOEY TAUS
OMANI AGAR LUNE
SPYON YODE ANTS

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See from afar
Remain unused
In the style of
Scotsman's denial
Place to catch the bus
Arena off
Bar rocks
Cow or hen
Little shaver

Dad's love
Doc in training
Fantastic times
Clan emblems
Struck powerfully
Meat stock jelly
Pinto horse
Bullfighter
Teeter-totter

never get off the ground

1 See from afar
2 Remain unused
3 In the style of
4 Scotsman's denial
5 Arena off
6 Bar rocks
7 Cow or hen
8 Little shaver

9 Dad's love
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11 Fantastic times
12 Clan emblems
13 Struck powerfully
14 Meat stock jelly
15 Pinto horse
16 Bullfighter
17 Teeter-totter

18 Never get off the ground

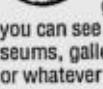


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Writers' strike a boon to reality TV

US networks have nearly 40 shows stacked up like jetliners over Christmas Eve runways awaiting the go-ahead to land

LOS ANGELES—FOR FIVE YEARS, JOHN Langley tried and failed to sell a cinema verite-style TV series tracking police officers on patrol. Then came the 1988 Hollywood writers strike.

"That's when Fox bought 'Cops' because a series with no narrator, no host, no script, no reenactments sounded very good to them at the time," recalled Langley, who just marked the show's 700th episode.

The nearly five-month '88 Writers Guild of America walkout didn't unleash a flood of reality, because filming on sitcoms and dramas had largely wrapped and because alternative shows had yet to become a trend.

But the current WGA strike fell smack during production as well as the Age of Reality, putting the brakes on scripted shows and giving networks a quick fix for holes. It remains to be seen how viewers—or the reality genre itself—will withstand the onslaught.

Networks have readied a slate of nearly 40 shows stacked up like jetliners over Christmas Eve runways awaiting the go-ahead to land.

Popularity

Given reality's popularity, many would have aired, strike or not, including Fox's blockbuster "American Idol," returning in January, and the next edition of ABC's hit "Dancing with the Stars." And how could CW say no to the "Pussycat Dolls Present: Girlicious" sequel or NBC rebuff "Celebrity Apprentice"?

But there's so much more in store, including ABC's "Dancing" spin-off, "Dance War: Bruno

vs. Carrie Ann" (Jan. 7) and game show "Duel" (Dec. 17), and Fox's experiment "When Women Rule the World" (March 3).

Other new shows are hovering, including Fox's "The Moment of Truth"; ABC's "Here Come the Newlyweds"; CBS' "Million Dollar Password" with Regis Philbin; NBC's comedy game show "Amnesia" with Dennis Miller; and CW's "Crowned: The Mother of All Pageants."

Bandage

That reality TV is being used as a bandage to try to stop the networks from bleeding viewers is a sharp irony for the union: It has been attempting to organize the producers and editors it argues actually "write" reality shows operating outside the WGA contract.

"Reality is a misnomer," said Jeff Hermanson, assistant executive director of the WGA, West. "It's really a euphemism for non-union TV. Networks should be embarrassed to put on shows where people who create them are treated in violation of California labor laws" and receive no benefits or overtime.

With the guild and studios resuming negotiations this week for the first time since the strike began, there was glimmer of hope that the dispute, which centers on pay for digital distribution, might be resolved. That would allow production to resume on scripted shows.

Even so, reality programs could end up the hallmark of 2007-08 season, providing an unprecedented bonanza for those who create it.

According to producer Mark Cronin ("Flavor of Love," "The Surreal Life"), networks recog-

nizing they must "protect themselves and fill their airspace" have ratcheted up demand for reality shows and pushed his company's pace from "50 mph to 70 mph."

While reality buffs may feel they're in heaven, it's a hellish scenario for admirers of "Grey's Anatomy," "30 Rock" and other scripted shows.

Even Cronin says reality should have its limits. "I don't feel like we have to destroy-and-conquer scripted television. It's not like that," he said. "I know people in the scripted world. I enjoy scripted shows."

He also is wary of ultimately alienating viewers. "You could imagine a future that has so much reality that the nation clamors for scripted content after all the reality content they've seen," he said.

Cheaper

Marc Berman, analyst for Media Week Online, notes that reality has been part of broadcast TV since the start—"Candid Camera" was born in 1948. "The Real World" got the new-wave party going in 1992, with the genre exploding in 2000 when ABC launched (and then overdosed on) "Who Wants to be a Millionaire" and CBS struck "Survivor" gold.

Alternative TV is more entrenched than ever: "We opened the fall season with the most non-scripted programming ever seen in the history of television," Berman said. It's cheaper to produce and "a lot of it works, so why not do it?"

But "if the strike continues with no end in sight, and there's more and more reality, viewers will get fed up with it," he predicted. AP

MMTA
METRO MANILA
THEATERS ASSOCIATION

MOVIE GUIDE

NOW SHOWING

SHANG CINEPLEX	Masagana CINEMA
1 ENCHANTED	1 PASUKOB
2 HITMAN	2 HITMAN
3 BEOWULF	3 BEOWULF
4 THE KINGDOM	Center Mall Cinema
5 MR MAGORIUM	Baguio Center Mall, Magaysay Avenue (Baguio City) tel (074) 4449346
6 PREMIERE	1 ENCHANTED
7 FRED CLAUS / BEOWULF	2 Jade Cinema (Angeles City) tel (045) 887.5001
8 CINEMA 2000	3 ONE MORE CHANCE
9 THE KINGDOM	4 PASUKOB
10 HITMAN	5 LIONS FOR LAMBS
11 BEOWULF	6 ENCHANTED
12 MR MAGORIUM	7 Centre Plaza Cinema (Baliuag, Batangas) tel (047) 237.7007
13 PREMIERE	8 THE KINGDOM
14 FRED CLAUS / BEOWULF	9 ENCHANTED
15 CINEMA 2000	10 PASUKOB
16 THE KINGDOM	11 ONE MORE CHANCE
17 HITMAN	12 EASTWOOD CINEMAS
18 BEOWULF	(Eastwood City Walk 2, Eastwood City E Rodriguez Jr. Ave (C-5) Quezon City) tel 887.4960 & 721.5000
19 MR MAGORIUM'S WONDER	20 PREMIERE
20 PREMIERE	21 THE KINGDOM
21 FRED CLAUS	22 ENCHANTED
22 PASUKOB	23 FRED CLAUS
23 THE KINGDOM	24 CINEMA 2000
24 HITMAN	25 Movie Theatres of the New Millennium
25 BEOWULF	26 Cinema 2000 Waltermart (Calamba) tel (049) 545.7383
26 MR MAGORIUM'S WONDER	27 ENCHANTED
27 PREMIERE	28 ONE MORE CHANCE
28 FRED CLAUS	29 PASUKOB
29 THE KINGDOM	30 THEATRES
30 HITMAN	31 GAME PLAN
31 BEOWULF	32 PASUKOB
32 MR MAGORIUM'S WONDER	33 ONE MORE CHANCE
33 PREMIERE	34 RESERVED
34 FRED CLAUS	35 RESERVED
35 THE KINGDOM	36 RESERVED
36 HITMAN	37 RESERVED
37 BEOWULF	38 Cinema 2000 Pavilion Mall (Biliran) tel (049) 4111146
38 MR MAGORIUM'S WONDER	39 RESERVED
39 PREMIERE	40 RESERVED
40 FRED CLAUS	41 PASUKOB
41 THE KINGDOM	42 ONE MORE CHANCE
42 HITMAN	43 ENCHANTED
43 BEOWULF	44 PASUKOB
44 MR MAGORIUM'S WONDER	45 GAME PLAN
45 PREMIERE	46 PASUKOB
46 FRED CLAUS	47 ONE MORE CHANCE
47 THE KINGDOM	48 RESERVED
48 HITMAN	49 RESERVED
49 BEOWULF	50 RESERVED
50 MR MAGORIUM'S WONDER	51 Cinema 2000 Cinemagic (Urdaneta) tel (075) 568.7771
51 PREMIERE	52 PASUKOB
52 FRED CLAUS	53 ONE MORE CHANCE
53 THE KINGDOM	54 ENCHANTED
54 HITMAN	55 PASUKOB
55 BEOWULF	56 GAME PLAN
56 MR MAGORIUM'S WONDER	57 PASUKOB
57 PREMIERE	58 ONE MORE CHANCE
58 FRED CLAUS	59 RESERVED
59 THE KINGDOM	60 RESERVED
60 HITMAN	61 RESERVED
61 BEOWULF	62 RESERVED
62 MR MAGORIUM'S WONDER	63 RESERVED
63 PREMIERE	64 RESERVED
64 FRED CLAUS	65 Cinema 2000 Metrotown (Tarlac) tel (045) 982.1729
65 THE KINGDOM	66 ONE MORE CHANCE
66 HITMAN	67 UNREST
67 BEOWULF	68 PASUKOB
68 MR MAGORIUM'S WONDER	69 GAME PLAN
69 PREMIERE	70 PASUKOB
70 FRED CLAUS	71 ONE MORE CHANCE
71 THE KINGDOM	72 ENCHANTED
72 HITMAN	73 PASUKOB
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201 PREMIERE	202 RESERVED
202 FRED CLAUS	203 RESERVED
203 THE KINGDOM	204 RESERVED
204 HITMAN	205 RESERVED
205 BEOWULF	

Reese is highest paid actress in US

Angelina Jolie is next, then Cameron Diaz

LOS ANGELES—EVEN THOUGH HER latest film, "Rendition," was a flop, Reese Witherspoon is a moneymaker.

The 31-year-old Academy Award winner commands \$15 million to \$20 million a movie, placing her at the top of The Hollywood Reporter's annual list of the highest-paid actresses.

Angelina Jolie came in second with similar salary demands, though the animated "Beowulf" earned the 32-year-old actress far less—just \$8 million.

Nicole, Renee...

Cameron Diaz was third, with a \$15 million-per-movie price tag. Nicole Kidman dropped to fourth place, two spots lower than last year, with an asking price of \$10 million to \$15 million a film.

Renee Zellweger and Sandra Bullock also get \$10 million to \$15 million paychecks. So does Julia Roberts, who hasn't appeared on the big screen since 2004. Her next film, "Charlie Wilson's War," is due in theaters in December.

Rounding out the top 10 are Drew Barrymore and Jodie Foster, who ask for \$10 million to \$12 million per project, and Halle Berry, who gets \$10 million a picture.

New trend

"Traditionally, the top male actors—like Mel Gibson and Tom Cruise—make around \$30 million per film, with a piece of the film's profits," Michelle Grabicki, associate features editor at the trade publication, told The Associated Press.

According to an AP-calculated look at executive pay, published in June, typical A-list stars such as Brad Pitt or Leonardo DiCaprio earn \$20 million plus 20 percent of the gross box office take per movie.

"Men traditionally command a higher salary than the women," Grabicki said. "It's a newer trend, women getting a percentage of the back end. Cameron Diaz is catching up with the men."

Gold mine

Grabicki said Diaz made around

sic.

Warner's latest

New releases from Warner Music Philippines:

James Blunt's "All the Lost Souls"; Garbage's "Absolute Garbage"; The Goo Goo Dolls' Greatest Hits Volume One The Singles"; and "Matchbox Twenty's "Exile on Mainstream."

Bocelli's best

"The Best of Andrea Bocelli: Vivere" (MCA) is one of more than 70,000 albums now available for downloading at FliptunesPlus, a Philippine-based music portal.

Other new titles include "Her Name is Nicole" (Nicole Scherzinger's debut album), "Coco" (Colbie Caillat) and "Long Road Out of Eden" (the Eagles' new studio album). Log on to www.fliptunesplus.net

Barrymore and Jodie Foster, who ask for \$10 million to \$12 million per project, and Halle Berry, who gets \$10 million a picture.



REESE Witherspoon, up to \$20 million per movie AP

ANGELINA Jolie

RENEE Zellweger

\$30 million for "Shrek 3" because of a generous share of the film's profits. She did not know the percentage.

The Hollywood Reporter's salary list only looked at two actresses—Diaz and "Grey's Anatomy" star Katherine Heigl—in terms of what they also make with box office film profits included, Grabicki said.

The salary list appears in The Hollywood Reporter's "Women in Entertainment: Power 100" issue on newsstands today in the U.S. AP



SANDRA Bullock



CAMERON Diaz

Positive and negative values on TV

AT A RECENT MEDIA FORUM, PARTICIPANTS discussed the values being overtly or subtly disseminated by some TV shows. We hope that their views, summarized here, will prompt TV workers to more responsibly regulate their work, so viewers' welfare can be upheld.

On the positive side, some participants cited some educational and religious programs for inspiring them to pay more attention to "things that really matter."

They also agreed that some news and public affairs shows helped them become more aware of what's happening in the nation and in the world.

For our part, we cited a couple of programs that conduct surveys and stage test challenges to see how people respond to different situations that are revelatory of human nature, or how Filipinos think and act.

On the negative side, quite a number of participants rapped dramatic teleseries for being escapist, improbable and/or excessively violent. The violence is more of the verbal and psychological sort, but its effects are potentially injurious all the same.

The naysayers asked: Why must characters in TV dramas be so vindictive and hateful? Even family members keep plotting against each other, and lovers are never safe from third, fourth or even fifth parties!

The way these vindictive and double-faced characters behave, impressionable viewers may conclude that nobody can be trusted, so their faith in others could be shaken.

The fantasy teleseries get criticized for being escapist and unreal, and their popularity is seen as indication of their soporific or paci-

VIEWFINDER

Nestor U. Torre

fier effect on viewers. In other words, they are lulled into a state of pleasurable inaction and uncaring that could affect their attitudes and actuations in the real world.

Children's shows, too

QUITE surprisingly, some children's shows are also rapped for too fantastically creating a never-never land that has nothing to do with reality.

On the other hand, kiddie programs are also criticized for treating their young singing or acting talents like little adults, thus radically abridging the natural length of time kids need to properly grow up and develop.

And one participant fretted that so many TV commercials featuring child "salesmen" could make Filipino kids overly materialistic, acquisitive and competitive.

As for sitcoms and comedy programs, some of them are rapped for not really being funny, for their slapstick and verbal insult quotients, and for their "in" jokes that cast members enjoy but leave befuddled viewers in the unfunny dark.

Some participants also felt that there is too much emphasis on making money by joining TV game and quiz programs. Nothing wrong

with making money, of course, but it's the "insulting" way that some contestants are treated that disturbed the participants.

In the light of these observations volunteered by concerned viewers, we trust that our TV people will, as the song lyric goes, "accentuate the positive (and) eliminate the negative" as for the values their shows dispense. Many young viewers are watching.

Movies on HBO

WATCH out for these promising movies on HBO this month: "Awakenings" with Robert De Niro and Robin Williams; "Babe: Pig in the City" with James Cromwell; "Back to the Future, 3" with Michael J. Fox and Christopher Lloyd; "Black Beauty" with Sean Bean; "Children of A Lesser God" with William Hurt and Marlee Matlin; "Crossing Deianeira" with Amy Irving and Peter Reigert.

"Fat Man and Little Boy" with Paul Newman and John Cusack; "Fly Away Home" with Anna Paquin and Jeff Daniels; "Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire"; "La Bamba" with Lou Diamond Phillips; "Little Nikita" with Sidney Poitier and River Phoenix; "Mrs. Harris" with Annette Bening and Ben Kingsley; "National Lampoon's European Vacation"; "Ordinary People" with Donald Sutherland and Mary Tyler Moore.

"Pale Rider" with Clint Eastwood; "Pride and Prejudice" with Keira Knightley and Rosamund Pike; "Reds" with Warren Beatty and Diane Keaton; "Ren" with Rosario Dawson and Taye Diggs; "Saving Private Ryan" with Tom Hanks; "The Education of Little Tree" with James Cromwell; and "The Nativity Story."

EASTWOOD CITY presents

WALK OF FAME PHILIPPINES

December 4, 2007 / 5PM
Eastwood Central Plaza
presented by Mr. German "Kuya Germs" Moreno

MR. MAGORIUM'S WONDER EMPORIUM
2:00, 4:15, 6:30, 8:45, 10:55
G

THE KINGDOM
3:35, 6:05, 8:35, 11:00
R-13

ENCHANTED
3:05, 5:35, 8:05, 10:35
G

FRED CLAUS
3:35, 6:05
G

HITMAN
8:35, 10:55
R-13

MTRCB RATING

PARENTS STRONGLY CAUTIONED

HITMAN

NOW SHOWING

GREENHILLS CINEMAS
THEATRE MALL GREENHILLS
a landmark renovation!
NOW SHOWING

ENCHANTED II HITMAN
11:00, 1:20, 3:40 //
6:00, 8:20, 10:35
GP / R-13

PASUKOB
11:20, 1:35, 3:50
6:05, 8:20, 10:35
PG - 13

DOLBY DIGITAL SURROUND EX

PROMENADE GREENHILLS
...a destination for all!
NOW SHOWING

FRED CLAUS
11:45, 2:25, 5:00
7:35, 10:10
GP

WONDER EMPIRIUM
11:20, 1:35, 3:50
6:05, 8:20, 10:35
GP

THE KINGDOM
11:45, 2:30, 5:10
7:50, 10:30
R-13

TICKET PRICES & SCREENING TIME SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE. FOR CINEMA INQUIRIES, CALL: 722 4496.

MUSIC MUSEUM
Nov. 30, * Into the Woods * musical 8:00 PM

Dec. 01, 7 & 8, 2007 Mark Hemas 8:00 PM

December 14, 2007 The Company 8:00 PM

December 15, 2007

December 04, 2007 Cerrudo Classico 8:00 PM

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